

Moravian Church Settlements - Gracehill

Local Management Plan (LMP)



DRAFT v6 06/24.

FOREWORD

The Moravian Settlement of GRACEHILL has long been recognised as a special place. It is the only complete Moravian Settlement in Ireland and the first designated Conservation Area in Northern Ireland. For over 20 years now the community have been involved in working up a nomination to become a UNESCO World Heritage site.

During this time, local partnerships have been created and an international network forged involving the Settlements of Christiansfeld (Denmark), Herrnhut (Germany), Bethlehem PA (USA) and of course Gracehill, Northern Ireland coming together in a Transnational Nomination to UNESCO entitled "Moravian Church Settlements"

Should nomination be successful there are plans at a national and international level but it is perhaps most important to have a shared local understanding and "tool kit" for the future. This Local Management Plan is the result of discussions and consultations but it is also a dynamic document which will no doubt change over time.

We sincerely thank all those have contributed to the vision and the journey to achieve Northern Ireland's first cultural World Heritage listing. We have a rare opportunity to achieve something of lasting significance that everyone can be proud of and share in, with substantial potential benefits now and for generations to come. Our only limitation is our imagination.



Gracehill Moravian Church



Dept. of Communities



Mid & East Antrim BC



Gracehill Trust.

Moravian Church Settlements - Gracehill Local Management Plan (LMP)

Gracehill Moravian Settlement, Local Management Plan

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1.Introduction

Purpose

Partners to the Moravian Church Settlements Transnational World Heritage bid have committed that, should their bid be successful, each component settlement will have:

*'a Site Manager/Coordinator and a local management steering or coordination group comprising key stakeholders. This group will take responsibility for a Local Management Plan.'*¹

The nomination document explains that these plans will be designed to address 'specific issues and achieve specific outcomes for the component part while also contributing to the fulfilment of objectives outlined in the International Management Plan'².

This document is the Local Management Plan for the component part of Gracehill.

The Site

The Moravian Church Settlements Transnational World Heritage site consists of 4 component parts: Herrnhut in Saxony, Germany; Bethlehem in Pennsylvania, United States; Christiansfeld in Southern Jutland, Denmark; and Gracehill in Northern Ireland, UK. Thus, **Gracehill village is not a World Heritage Site on its own**, it must be managed as a component part of the whole. The management arrangements set out in this document aim to deliver appropriate and consistent management for this component part.

Process

The Plan has been developed according to the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (UNESCO, 2021) and is in line with the International Management Plan, agreed between the participating local groups and state parties, which was submitted to UNESCO in February 2023. This plan has been refined through local consultation and agreement. It has also been reviewed and agreed with the international management system of the Moravian Church Settlements Transnational Steering Group; the Moravian Transnational Advisory Group; and the Intergovernmental Committee of state parties.

Validity

This Local Management Plan, in addition to local consultation, has been formally endorsed by the key local stakeholders involved in the Gracehill component of this world heritage bid. It has been adopted by them as an agreed framework for action in the village, should UNESCO decide to designate it as part of the Moravian Church Settlements World Heritage Site.

These partners are:

Gracehill Trust, Gracehill Moravian Church, The Department for Communities, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, & The Galgorm Group³.

¹ P32 Moravian Church Settlements International Management Plan

² *ibid*

³ The Galgorm Group is the name of the parent company that owns the Galgorm Hotel and Spa

2. The World Heritage Site and its Significance

Outstanding Universal Value

All World Heritage sites are understood to have 'Outstanding Universal Value'. They are considered important not only to local people or to a country but to the world – to all of humanity. Gracehill was the first Conservation Area designated in Northern Ireland in 1974, so it has been considered a place of special architectural and historic interest by the Government of Northern Ireland for a long while. Its fine state of preservation also suggests that it has been appreciated by its own residents and surrounding community for much longer than that. World Heritage, however, is something altogether greater. This means that the international community, in the form of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has included a site on a list of the most important historic and natural places on earth. As of January 2023, this select list includes 1,157 sites across 167 countries. 900 are cultural sites, 218 are natural sites- like the Giant's Causeway- and 39 are mixed properties.

UNESCO sets out criteria against which universal value is judged. The Moravian sites nomination document has made the following justification to UNESCO on its importance:

'Criterion (iii): *The transnational series of Moravian Church Settlements bears exceptional testimony to Moravian Church principles, the community's faith, way of life, and distinct religious and social ideals which are expressed in the towns' layouts, architecture, and craftsmanship, as well as the fact that numerous buildings are still used either for their original function or the continuation of Moravian Church activities and traditions. An exceptional range of essential tangible and intangible attributes allow these settlements to be recognised as the most significant examples of Moravian Church settlements, part of a unique and vibrant worldwide network in which no settlement or congregation exists in isolation. Moravian cultural tradition is characterised by the quest for an ordered communal Christian life, as well as by recurrent experiences of migration and a high level of mobility, the settlement congregations acting as places of support for local outreach and missionary work. The continuing presence of Moravian Church communities in each settlement ties the historic structures to the ongoing life of the larger Moravian Church community, which is based on the ideal of a universal fellowship of believers that cuts across all boundaries of nationality, ethnicity, gender, culture, and class.'*



‘Criterion (iv): *The transnational series of Moravian Church Settlements is an outstanding example of intentional religious town planning within the Protestant tradition, combining both spiritual aspects and practical considerations of community life. Each settlement bears witness to the Moravian Church vision of a unified and coherent urban design, inspired by ancient and biblical concepts of the ‘ideal city’ and anticipating Enlightenment ideals of equality and social improvement that became a reality for many Europeans only much later. Transforming patterns of civic architecture of the late Baroque period, Moravian Church Settlements stand for the movement towards democratisation, offering the same standard of living to all its members. Open public space, shared gardens, provisions for schools and medical facilities, as well as thoughtful arrangements for agriculture and industry served to advance the common welfare. Each settlement possesses distinctive functions and illustrates unity through homogenous groups of buildings with shared styles, materials, and proportions (each with local variation), together with a consistent high quality of Moravian Church craftsmanship.’*

There is a lot packed into these two paragraphs. They have been designed to illustrate to UNESCO why they should agree that they meet their criteria, rather than explaining to a lay audience what they should understand about the site.

So, what you need to understand is the following:

- The Moravian Church had spiritual, societal, and ethical ideals that aimed at the creation of an intentional religious community. These found expression in a distinctive style of town planning and architecture.
- The Church developed distinct building types, including the particular type of Gemeinhaus (congregation building), Church, several Choir Houses (large structures designed as communal dwellings for unmarried men, unmarried women and widows), and a distinctive God’s Acre (cemetery) placed nearby.
- The Church was influenced in its planning decisions by ancient and biblical concepts of the ‘ideal city’ and by ideas of equality and social improvement. It invested in schools and medical facilities, open space, and agricultural and industrial developments.
- The church was active in missionary activity, spreading across the world and aspired to an ideal of a universal fellowship of believers cutting across all boundaries of nationality, ethnicity, gender, culture, and class. For example, in Bethlehem in the US, Native Americans are buried beside Europeans. In Gracehill, protagonists from both sides were given shelter during the 1798 Rebellion.

- 200 Moravian settlements and mission stations across the world were reviewed and assessed as part of the research for the World Heritage bid to UNESCO. The four chosen were considered to be the most important surviving examples:
 - *Herrnhut* (commenced 1722), is the mother and original settlement of the Renewed Moravian Church and illustrates the original Moravian urban design principles and their development.
 - *Christiansfeld*, (commenced 1773), already on the WH list, is considered the best-preserved Moravian Church settlement in the world and the best example of a settlement in the 'Moravian Church Civic Baroque' style.
 - *Gracehill*, (commenced 1759), is the best example of a settlement exemplifying the Moravian ideal in the British Isles and the only example built in Ireland. It is representative of a development of the ideal urban plan with a gender axis - the division of the town plan into a sisters side and a brother's side - that directly relates to the most fundamental structure of Moravian Society. It is laid out in the Georgian Style typical of architecture in this area at that time, but this has 'Moravian Church Civic Baroque' influences.
 - *Bethlehem*, (commenced 1741), predates the American Revolution and is also in the Georgian Style with 'Moravian Church Civic Baroque' influences. It highlights the early transatlantic dimension of the church in its most prolific building decade and adds the cultural dimension of their outreach to Native Americans. It is the best-preserved settlement in North America.
- Taken together, this group *'illustrate the origins, evolution, and global spread of Moravian Church settlements during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries'*⁴.
- Because they all still have an active Moravian church, they are also considered to represent a continuing religious heritage (intangible heritage) and to represent the spiritual investment of many generations sharing a common set of values.
- Gracehill, in addition to its high state of preservation, and existing congregation, also holds the archive of the Moravian Church in Ireland. This includes diaries kept by each minister of Gracehill since its foundation. This is a unique record.

The Importance of Gracehill

The Village is important for its plan, historic buildings, setting and its continuing use as a Moravian site. The Nomination document explains how the village relates to other parts of the Moravian world and lists its main attributes. It explains why the inclusion of the village is fundamental to the OUV of the overall site:

'The Moravian 'new town' of Gracehill was planned from 1759-64 and built on a substantially green-field agricultural site in the remote and somewhat wild north of Ireland at the time. It forms part of a series of geometrically similar 'ideal' urban plans which include Herrnhag (1738, Hesse, Germany, with the first quadratic square), Gnadenberg (1743, Lower Silesia, Poland), Gnadau (1767, Saxony, Germany), Christiansfeld (1773, Denmark) and ultimately Königsfeld (1807, Baden-Württemberg, Germany). A member of the local planning committee of 1763 was John Toeltschig, from Herrnhut, who had experience in the establishment of Moravian Church settlements in Europe and North America, and he was joined by others from

⁴ P11 Moravian Church Settlements International Management Plan.

Germany. Financing for the Church and the Brothers' and Sisters' Choir Houses was directly through a 10-year loan from the Directory in Herrnhut.⁵

Main Attributes

- *'Ideal' settlement plan adapted to topography, with an exceptional 'gender axis' that follows yet bisects the main baroque axis.*
- *The Central Square ensemble' of early Moravian Church buildings, mostly constructed in the second half of the 18th century and early 19th century, in the architectural style of Moravian Church civic baroque, locally termed 'Moravian Irish Georgian', marking the first complete transfer of the Moravian building tradition from the European continent, via England, to the island of Ireland. The ensemble displays distinctive local building materials (exposed local black basalt and distinctive 'galleting', red brick detailing, slate roofs, etc) and illustrates characteristic high levels of Moravian craftsmanship. It comprises the Moravian Church with Original Warden's House and Original Manse, Choir Houses (Original Single Sisters', Original Single Brethren's, New Single Brethren's, Widows'), Weaving Manufactory, Congregation Store, Congregation Inn, Ladies Academy, and Family House – an example of a number that survive in the settlement.*
- *God's Acre as a large and well-preserved linear Moravian cemetery that is uniquely aligned as a key part (higher segment) of the settlement design that is perfectly divided by the gender axis. It highlights diversity in the congregation that relates closely to settlement function, especially the Diaspora, and also to the geography of Moravian Church missions that were administered by a number of Gracehill ministers and assistants.*
- *Continued Moravian ownership and use.*

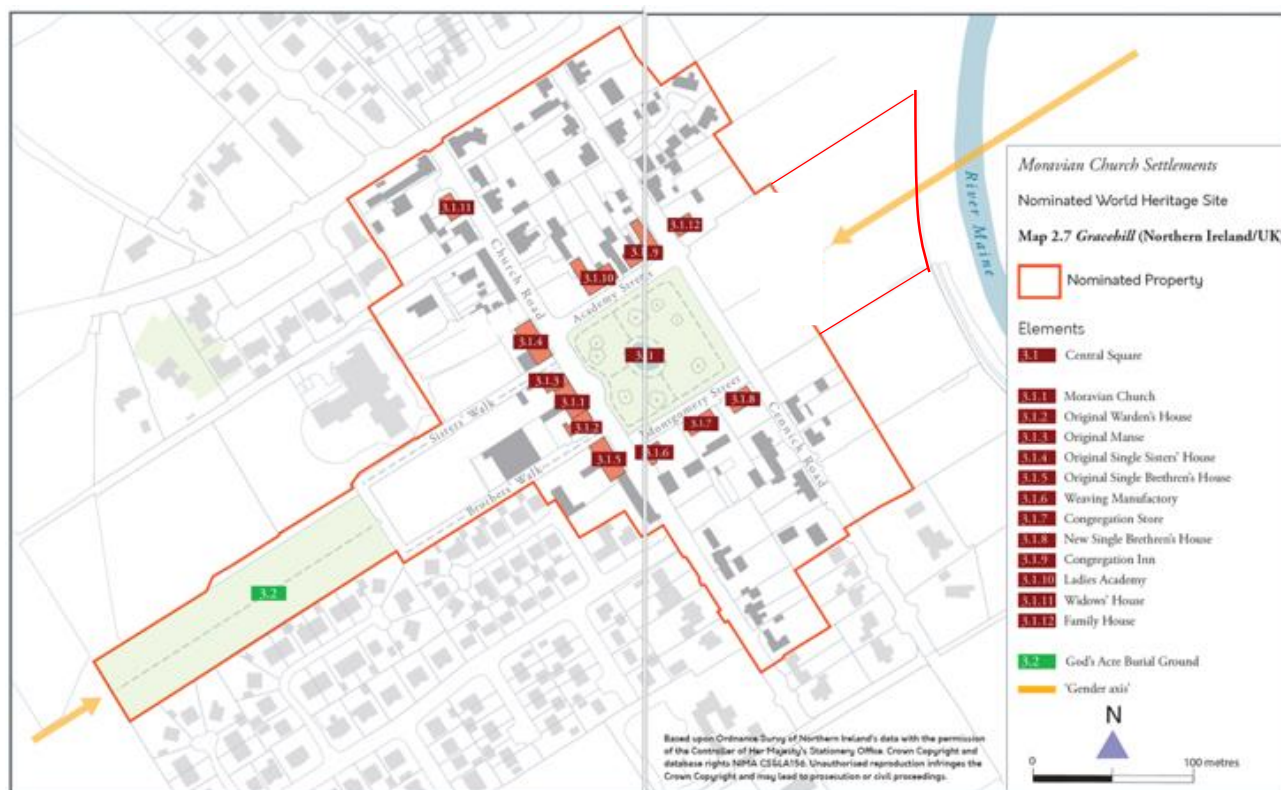
Principal Contribution to OUV

- *Exemplar of a Moravian Church settlement built to serve an existing concentration of Diaspora societies, translating Moravian theology and philosophy into a contrasting cultural context and remote rural environment.*
- *The most precise demonstration of a gender axis in the urban plan, part of an evolving series implemented in the post-Zinzendorf era of settlement foundation (after 1760).*
- *Sustainable, green space urban planning.*
- *Exceptional illustration of the blending of Moravian Church Civil Baroque with regional architecture (Irish Georgian).⁶*

⁵ P86 Moravian Church Settlements Nomination Document.

⁶ P10 Moravian Settlements International Management Plan,

The Gracehill Component Part



The map shows the extent of the nominated property at Gracehill. This is slightly smaller than the area which has been protected as a Conservation Area since 1974 as the housing estate to the south and modern housing to the southeast of the settlement has not been included. In 1974, the Planners wished to ensure that new development was in keeping with the character of the historic village. For the World Heritage bid, a boundary enclosing only the historic development has been selected. This is to be consistent with the approach followed by the other parts of the proposed World Heritage Site. To the northeast the boundary has been extended over open fields to the river to enclose the historic axis of the settlement. Within the site, the key buildings around the square are also listed buildings. This means that Listed Building Consent is required from the Planning Authority (Mid and East Antrim Borough Council) for changes to the exterior or interior that might affect their character.

While the principal Moravian buildings are found around the square, the main axis of the settlement forms a gender axis from the centre of the western end of God's Acre to the southwest. This travels northeast through the male and female sides of the burial ground and the Brothers' and Sisters' walks, through the centre of the church, where men and women sat to each side, and divides their flanking choir houses. It moves on through a central pond in the square, and travels along a field boundary to the river. The axis is ultimately in broad alignment with an ancient Irish fort and the Jacobean Galgorm Castle, a total distance of around 1 km.

Most of the original buildings have been preserved, directly fronting the streets in characteristic Moravian Church style, with space for work yards, gardens, or orchards behind. Long fields below Cennick (or Low) Road are oriented with the grid and fall to the River Maine and are part of the original settlement plan.

To ensure the appropriate management of the place, the Management Plan needs to be clear on the individual structures and their important attributes. The following pages go into this in more detail.

Architecture

The earliest one and two-storey buildings (some with attics and dormers) reflect an influence of 'Moravian Church Civic Baroque' on 'Irish' Georgian. The Church is modelled on the *Herrnhut* Church. Internally, however, the church exhibits local differences between British and continental interiors, including a 'Tulip' pulpit with stairs. Later buildings are mostly characterised by an 'Irish Georgian' architectural style.

Building-types

The Communal buildings, built to serve specific differentiated functions, are typically substantial structures and usually front the street. Key building types are illustrated in *Gracehill* which represent common elements shared with other *Moravian Church Settlements*. These include the church (*Herrnhut* model), manse and warden's house, choir houses (there were nine different choirs in *Gracehill*) including the original Single Sisters' House and original Single Brethren's House, the Widow's House, and the New Single Brethren's House, together with a Congregation Inn, Congregation Store, Ladies Academy, light industrial buildings such as the Weaving Manufactory, and God's Acre.

Distinctive building materials and construction methods visually comprise two main types:

1. Traditional exposed hand-dressed ashlar stone, commonly with decorative 'galleting'.
2. Rubble stone construction rendered externally with stucco, and lime washed in pale colours.

Buildings such as the Church and Choir Houses were slate-roofed from the outset, while many cottages were originally straw-thatched (some until the 1960s), subsequently replaced with Welsh slate. Original roof frames of Norwegian timber survive.

1. Basalt is the predominant stone. This hard volcanic rock (mafic, ferro-magnesium rich), for which nearby Giant's Causeway is famed, was quarried locally. It is predominantly dark grey (black when broken), although alteration of its iron-rich minerals creates brown hues. Hand-dressed, split-faced, ashlar is regularly coursed, set with lime mortar, and commonly features decorative 'galleting' in the form of lines of small basalt spalls pressed into wet mortar joints between courses.

Some buildings have brick window jambs and heads (bricks were made by the *Gracehill* Brethren).

2. The second type comprises stone-built constructions rendered flush with stucco. On the church, lines were scribed to give the ordered finish of cut stone. Other stuccoed buildings are distributed throughout the settlement. Traditionally, since the early eighteenth century in Moravian Church settlements, pale limewash colours are used on rendered building exteriors.

The use of black-painted iron railings on low walls, together with lattice '*Gracehill*' porches on family houses, is also characteristic.

Central Square (3.1 on map. Green levelled and planted in 1776, with fishpond added in 1777)

A grid-pattern of axial streets was formed around the central green square, creating the NNW-SSE axis by straightening two existing roads (now Church Road and Cennick Road) that pass

through the settlement, together with right-angled linking walks (now Academy Street and Montgomery Street).

The park-like Square (80 x 72 m), with the slightly longer sides aligned with the main axis of the settlement, is visually dominated by the Moravian Church on the west (upper) side and surrounded on two other sides by historic Moravian buildings.

The Square is laid mostly to grass lawn. In the centre is an oval-shaped pond (originally a fishpond), restored in 2014, surrounded by a pathway which extends in three ways to a perimeter gravelled pathway originally established in 1798. The main, gated, curve-bayed entrance is directly opposite the church. Mature deciduous trees provide summer shade. Lime, as in *Herrnhut* and *Christiansfeld*, is the dominant species lining three sides of the square. More have now been planted on the eastern side.

On the other two sides (North and South), the Square is lined by former Moravian communal buildings, while the open (East) end overlooks what was Moravian farmland (still open fields) to a bend in the River Maine and across the valley to the earthworks of McQuillan's Castle, and to Galgorm Castle and its golf course, located within its former landscaped demesne.

On the west side of the square are:

Moravian Church (3.1.1 on map. 1765, enlarged 1798, cupola bell tower and clock 1798, replaced 1922)

The Church was modelled by *Gracehill's* Warden Anton Seiffert after the present example in *Herrnhut* (1756-57) and consecrated as 'New Hall' on 6 November 1765. It is constructed of rubble stone which was originally lime sand plastered, but rendered with stucco in 1948. The roof with symmetrical ridge-line chimneys at either end was covered with Welsh slate from the outset (as was the Brothers' and Sisters' Choir houses). The hall is 18 x 10 m and preserves the original separate doors for male and female members of the Congregation. Interior porches date from 1836. Small arched windows are above each porticoed door while three large central round-arched windows flood the hall with daylight.

The Church has flanking wings (originally matching) comprising Warden's House and Manse, and to the north (on Church Road) what was originally the Single Sisters' House and to the south the Single Brethren House.

Internally it displays local differences between British and continental European examples in that it has a wooden pulpit (1842, replacing one of 1773, and very similar to the pulpit in *Bethlehem*) with stairs, end galleries (one with organ) and moveable benches (1866) in unpainted wood, stained-glass windows (inserted in the 1950s and modified in 1962 to bear plaques from the closed Dublin Moravian Church), and a carpeted floor (clay until 1842, then wooden). Electricity was installed in 1939. The church remains the focal point of *Gracehill*.

Original Warden's House (3.1.2 on map. 1765) now **Manse**

The present Manse was originally the Warden's House and switched in function in 1817. Its front four-windowed façade is aligned with the church and meets the pavement, a matching pair in scribed stucco with the current Warden's House in the north. Its entrance front and small front garden faces south and has been extended several times (the annex on the left dates from 1815 while still the Warden's House. It is still home to *Gracehill's* Moravian Minister.

Original Manse (3.1.3 on map. 1765) now **Warden's House**

The present Warden's House was originally the Manse and switched in function in 1817. Its front four-windowed façade is aligned with the church and meets the pavement, a matching pair in scribed stucco with the current Manse in the south. Like its pair, the roof is stepped lower than the church roof.

Original Single Sisters' House (3.1.4 on map. 1765, enlarged 1798, subsequently Girls' Day School and Ladies (boarding) Academy in 1873, Public Elementary School in 1931

This two-storey, ten-bayed, building with basement has an offset doorway and gable ends with five windows including a larger arched window at top (also a doorway to the northern gable end), and a Welsh slate roof. It was originally built as a choir house, the first Single Sisters' House, and the second building in the priority of construction. It was placed in symmetry with the later Single Brothers' House on the south side of the church and originally contained spaces for a dormitory, prayer room and lacemaking, embroidery, bookbinding, and other crafts.

The Sisters moved out in 1873, they exchanged premises with the Ladies Academy on the north side of the square, and the Academy finally closed in 1892. These attracted pupils from across Ireland, of any religious denomination because *Gracehill* always remained a place of political and religious neutrality. The school closed when the new Gracehill Primary School and Nursery Unit was opened in 2000, within a former playground area located 75 m to the west. No less than four schools (including boarding facilities) operated simultaneously in *Gracehill*, an exemplar highlighting the significance of Moravian secular and religious education which started in *Gracehill* in 1765. The Gracehill Trust acquired the property and implemented extensive conservation works including internal remodeling and the reversal of inappropriate interventions. The building now accommodates a restaurant and visitor facilities.

Original Single Brethren's House (3.1.5 on map. 1767, also Boy's Day School from 1770, Boys' Academy 1819-89)

A two-storey, nine-bayed, building with gabled dormers to one half and steps with railings to central porticoed entrance. Gable ends have three windows including a round-arch with fanlight at top. The stone-built structure is rendered with stucco, grey-dyed to match the tone of other buildings, with lines scribed into it to give the ordered finish of cut stone (matching the church ensemble). Welsh slate roof.

The unmarried men (Single Brothers) of the community worked in the weaving manufactory in Gracehill, made linen, shoes, bricks, and ran a carpentry and wheelwright business. They were also responsible for the community fire engine. After swiftly incorporating a Boys' Day School, the building hosted the Boys' (boarding) Academy when the Single Brethren moved to their new house on the SE corner of the square following 1819.

On the south side of the square are:

Weaving Manufactory (3.1.6 on map. 1764-68)

Located on the corner of Church and Montgomery streets, the Single Brethren's Workshop and subsequently 'manufactory' (weaving brown linen cloth) is the oldest building built by the Moravian Church in *Gracehill* (foundation stone 26 April 1764). It highlights the role of economic activity in the self-sufficiency ideals of *Moravian Church Settlements*. It housed the Single Brethren's dormitory on the first floor until their new Choir House, located directly opposite, was ready in February 1768.

The Single Brethren sold their linen in the Congregation Store in the same street and at local fairs. The original front window layout has changed from five to nine windows, and their size reduced.

Congregation Store (3.1.7 on map. 1766-68, extended 1787 as the New Congregation Shop, also the last post office)

Located halfway down the south side of the Square, this two-storey, eight-bayed, building with attics and basement has an Ionic-columned doorway directly to the pavement. Single windows to end gables and a Welsh slate roof (re-slatted in 1835 and 2019). Built as the Congregation Store, it further emphasises the anomaly of 'modern' *Gracehill* in the north of Ireland at that

time. Later known as the village shop it was also the last post office in *Gracehill*; and where the earliest (July 1847) possible transatlantic use of the first stamped mail from the US arrived.

The Congregation's business ended in 1854, after which time it was a privately-run shop and post office. It was acquired by the Gracehill Old School Trust in 2012 which has undertaken repairs and restorations. Original features survive such as a large wooden winch wheel for drawing stores up to the attic, together with counters and shelving built into walls.

New Single Brethren House (3.1.8 on map. 1819)

Located on the eastern corner of the square, the New Single Brethren's House was built in 1819 to replace a decrepit doctor's house of 1769 (originally the only private dwelling in the square). It incorporated the Boys' Day School in the basement, and a savings bank on the ground floor from 1831.

This two-storey classical symmetrical Georgian style building with slated roof and basement is built of neatly coursed black basalt ashlar with 'galleted' lime-mortared joints. Classical early sash windows are set back from the face of the walls and have brick window jambs and flat-arched heads in matching brick voussoirs. A covered semi-circular arched entrance doorway has cone-topped railings flanking a flight of steps. Now a private residence.

On the north side of the square are:

Congregation Inn (3.1.7 on map. 1776-79)

The Congregation Inn was built in characteristic locational fashion on the northern corner of the square and fronting both Academy Street and Cennick Road which was the historical main road through the settlement. This L-shaped building in grey-dyed stucco covering original coursed basalt ashlar was built to accommodate travellers and non-Moravian visitors to *Gracehill*, because no stranger was allowed to be accommodated in a private house within the settlement. In an intentional and institutional practice of hospitality the Moravian congregational inn served the purpose of facilitating and regulating contact with the settlement's surroundings, combining economic, social, political, and religious functions. Later the property was advertised as an hotel and was especially used by parents visiting their children at the boys' and girls' boarding schools. Now several private houses.

Ladies Academy (3.1.10 on map. 1797)

Next to the inn is this nine-bayed, two-storey, exposed basalt building with two front doors, railings, and gateways to the street. It has characteristic 'galleted' lime-mortared joints and a Welsh slate roof. Two wings extend to the north, the larger one on the west fronts a large garden (a vacant plot from the early years) and was originally built in 1792 as a retirement home for the pastor, with the intention that it would also serve as a ladies' boarding school (from 1798). From 1873, it became the second Single Sisters' House when the academy exchanged premises with the original Single Sisters' House (now the Old School). Now the property is a private house.

Along Church Road, further to the north, are:

Widows' House (3.1.11 on map. 1768, 1792)

Nine-bayed, two-storey, exposed basalt building with single offset front door and railings and gateway to the street. It has characteristic 'galleted' lime-mortared joints and a Welsh slate roof. It was originally built as a Widow's choir house (and girls' academy), in line with the Church and Sisters' House and in symmetry with a Widowers' and Boys' House also on Church Road and which survived until the 1960s. The Widows' House was restored in 1970, communal use ceased in 1973, and it is now a private residence.

Family House (3.1.12 on map. Eighteenth century)

Around a dozen eighteenth-century cottages survive in the Conservation Area (out of 23 built between 1768 and 1792), developed in the original grid plan as ‘family houses’ of a very different style from those in the surrounding districts. They mostly retain their original generous garden plots. These are supplemented by nineteenth- and twentieth-century additions to the community.

God’s Acre Burial Ground (3.2 on map. 1761)

God’s Acre follows protocols of the prototype in *Herrnhut* but is linear in form and notably integrated into the overall design of *Gracehill* from the outset. It dates from 1761, older than the church and other buildings, and was extended westwards in 1859. The burial ground is a long and comparatively narrow linear plot of 2.2 hectares, located in perfect alignment with, and above/behind, the Church, separated from it by former gardens (now the modern Cennick Hall and a patch of wild shrubbery and woodland). It is approached by the Brothers’ Walk and Sisters’ Walk (each around 170 m long), which begin in gender symmetry either side of the Church and which meet at the gate to God’s Acre, which then extends for over 150 m to the west. Females are buried on the right (north) of the central path and males on the left side (south).

A central tree-lined pathway divides the female and male sides (N, right, and S, left) with characteristic simple unadorned flat headstones. The grounds are sheltered and shaded by mature trees, including original plantings. There are around 1,560 burials. God’s Acre continues to serve the Moravian Congregation today.

Intangibles

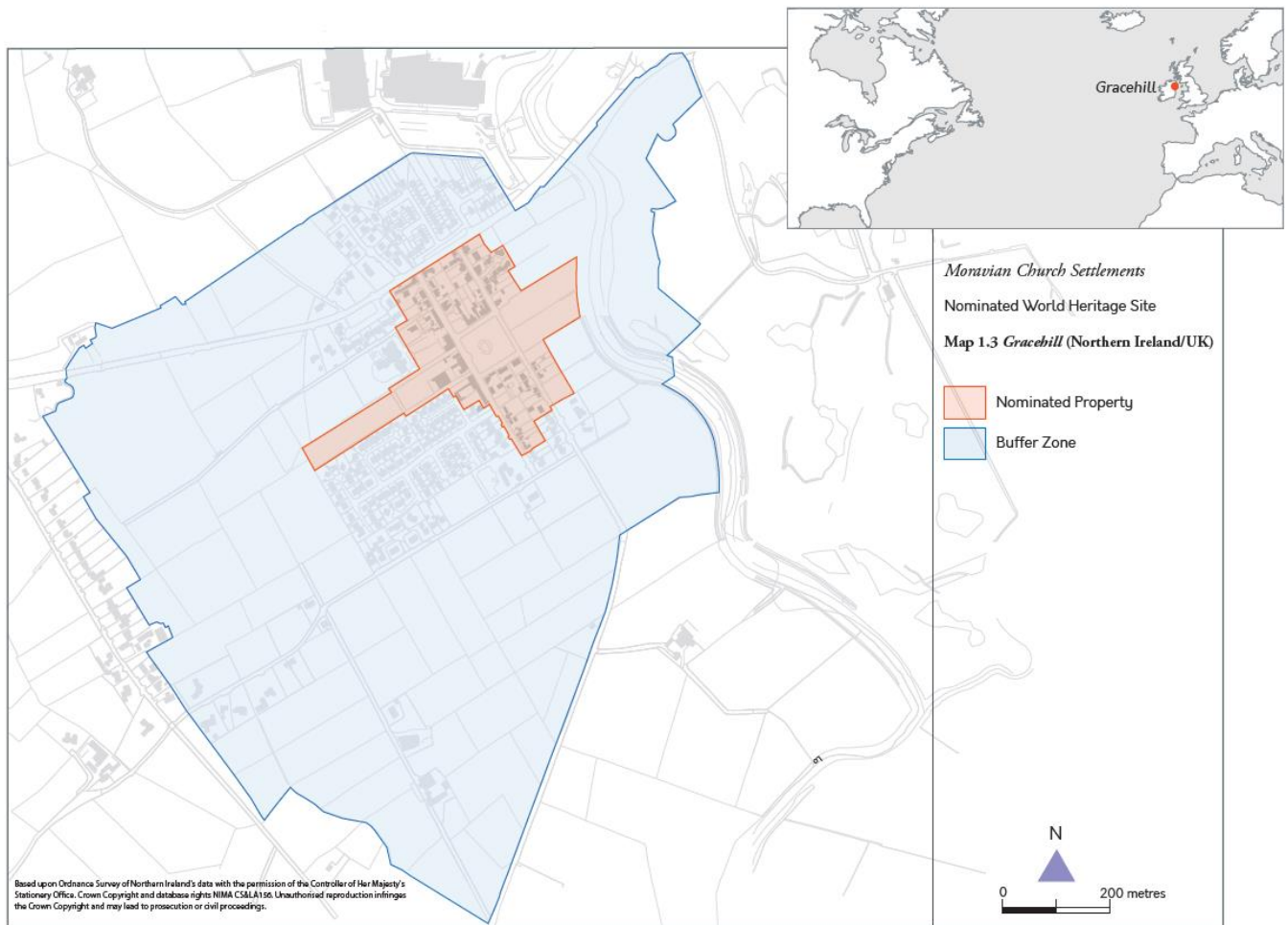
Gracehill is characterised by historical universal religious and political tolerance and support, notably neutrality and reconciliation first evidenced in the ‘United Irishmen Rebellion’ in 1798. Significant missionary activity is mostly associated with the Caribbean, with islands formerly part of the British West Indies (Jamaica, St Kitts, Barbados, Antigua, Trinidad and Tobago). There is a Grace Hill in Barbados and a Gracehill in Antigua. *Gracehill* retains an active congregation.

The Moravian Church in *Gracehill* hosts the archives of most of the Moravian work in Ireland. Collectively such material reflects not only administrative order but also a memory bank that is characteristic of Moravian Church cultural tradition.

The Buffer Zone

A Buffer Zone is an area surrounding a World Heritage Site that gives an added layer of protection to the Site. Buffer Zones should include the immediate setting of the nominated Site, important views and other areas or attributes that are functionally important as a support to the Site and its protection. UNESCO advises that *‘It should be clearly understood that the buffer zone does not form part of the World Heritage property but is there to assist in its protection, conservation and management.....The features and values of a buffer zone are ... not included in the assessment of Outstanding Universal Value but may be relevant to the assessment of whether a nominated property meets requirements for integrity, authenticity, protection and management’*⁷

⁷ Source: [The World Heritage Resource Manual Preparing World Heritage Nominations \(2nd edition, UNESCO 2011\)](#)



The buffer zone drawn around Gracehill covers the rural area surrounding most of the site and the wooded area across the river in the Galgorm Estate. The surrounding countryside was replanned and laid out by the Moravians at the same time as the foundation of their settlement and their impact on the landscape is evident in the grid like field boundary patterns, often tree lined, reflecting their agricultural organisation and approach. This contributes to the integrity and authenticity of the site. The boundary to the southwest is marked by more recent development and to the northwest by field boundaries adjacent to the 20th century development along Galgorm Road (this was requested by ICOMOS following their site visit of July 2023). To the southeast a rural road (Nursery Road) cutting through the field pattern is taken as a boundary. The mature trees bounding the river and Galgorm Castle Estate opposite the settlement are an important part of the setting of the site and contribute to the landscape character.

The buffer zone, should it be agreed by UNESCO, brings some additional restrictions in planning policy. However views into and out of Gracehill Conservation Area are already a material consideration for planning decisions, but planners will now also be able to take into account the contribution the lands make to the settlement and its understanding and enjoyment.

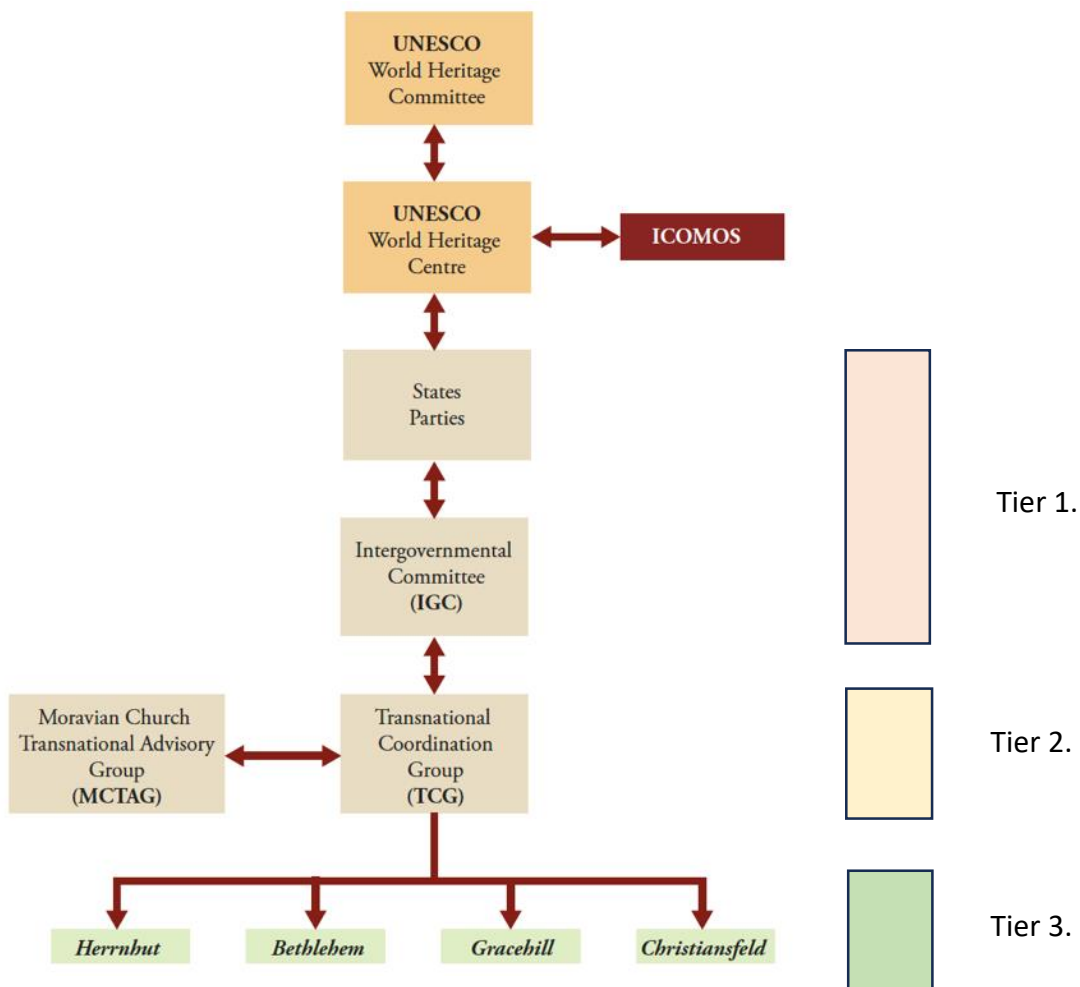
The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) for Northern Ireland advises Planning Authorities to draw up policies for World Heritage Sites and Mid and East Antrim have committed to do this. Their policy must align with the SPPS policy on World Heritage Sites:

6.6 Development that would adversely affect the Outstanding Universal Value of a World Heritage Site (WHS) or the integrity of its setting must not be permitted unless there are overriding exceptional circumstances.

‘6.7 Inclusion of a WHS on a list published by UNESCO highlights the outstanding international importance of the site as a material consideration in the determination of planning and listed building consent applications, and appeals. Planning authorities must carefully consider applications affecting the Outstanding Universal Value of such sites, particularly taking into account the safeguarding of critical views to and from the site, the access and public approaches to the site and the understanding and enjoyment of the site by visitors. ‘

Section 3. The Management System.

As explained in the introduction, Gracehill is a component part of a wider World Heritage Site. Three tiers of management have been developed to ensure the best supervision of the site. These are:



Intergovernmental Committee (IGC)

The Intergovernmental Committee (IGC) is composed of the national/regional World Heritage focal points (normally referred to as 'States Parties') for the four countries which have component parts of the site. For the UK this is an employee of Historic England who liaises closely with the World Heritage Coordinator within the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS). The group expect to meet annually, though this can be more frequent if required. DCMS and EH keep close contact with DfC in respect of NI issues.

Tasks: These include: representing the interests of the respective States; the mutual provision of information including monitoring and reporting on the state of conservation; notification to UNSECO of major restorations or new constructions that may affect the OUV of the property; coordination and strategic planning; joint projects where appropriate; raising public awareness of the World Heritage Site and approving the updated versions of the International Management Plan.

As part of a possible future extension process, the States Parties on the territory of which the existing World Heritage Site is located must first consent to the inclusion of the nominating State that is not yet a Partner.

Transnational Coordination Group (TCG),

The Transnational Coordination Group (TCG) is composed of the various stakeholders on the national, regional, and local level in each country. It coordinates transnational management and the network of national site managers/coordinators, taking responsibility for the International Management Plan. It reports to the IGC regarding monitoring and other key aspects required by UNESCO, and works on behalf of the IGC in preparing documents for their meetings. The TCG is the body which has met monthly throughout the nomination process and is expected to continue to meet two to three times per year, with the option to meet more frequently, if the nomination is accepted. The UK is represented by: Gracehill Trust; Gracehill Moravian Church; Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and the Department for Communities.

Objectives

The principles of Protection, Conservation, Presentation and Transmission as set out in the international management plan will help to guide joint objectives. The main objective is to protect, conserve, oversee, and to sustainably develop the property and its Outstanding Universal Value in active cooperation with the national coordination offices.

Tasks.

These include:

Coordination of the transnational management of the World Heritage Site

Conservation of the property: Monitoring the state of conservation of the Site.

Periodic Reporting: Coordinating periodic reports from all component parts to UNESCO according to article 29 of the World Heritage Convention

Reactive Monitoring: Providing information to the IGC about any developments or projects that may have an impact on the OUV of the property at the earliest possible moment.

Public Relations: Promoting and supporting the interpretation and

presentation of the serial property on an international level.

International Actions Plan: The development of activities on an international level through an agreed action plan and their implementation.

Research: The promotion and coordination of scientific research on Moravian Church Settlements.

Annual Report: To inform IGC about the state of conservation, management issues, its activities and the implementation of the International and the Local Management Plans.

Extension(s): By request of the IGC, the TCG will provide its opinion on any proposal for an extension to the serial transnational inscription and will advise the possible nomination process if the State Party so wishes.

Financing: The sending institutions pay the costs for their participants of the meeting. Unless agreed otherwise, the costs for the participation of third parties are financed by the institution that suggested the invitation. Questions which concern the financing of common projects are a matter for the Committee.

Moravian Church Transnational Advisory Group (MCTAG)

This advisory group supports the Transnational Group in its decision making. The role and proactive involvement of the Moravian Church community is considered key to the sustainable long-term preservation, management, and conservation of the World Heritage Site. The transnational character of the proposed World Heritage Site is sustained by the Moravian Church as a global body.

The Group represents the views of this overarching transnational stakeholder as a property owner and religious community. MCTAG also serves as an advisory body for all issues concerning the identity, belief, religious life, values and activities of the Moravian Church on the transnational level.

The agreed purpose of the Group is to:

- Protect and conserve the tangible/built heritage as well as the conservation of intangible attributes.
- Contribute to the vision of *Moravian Church Settlements (MCS)*.
- Ensure connection and cooperation between the Moravian Church congregations, administration and owners of all component parts.
- Contribute to the shared objectives of the *MCS* International Management Plan.
- Contribute to the *MCS* Interpretation Strategy to ensure an authentic representation of the history, beliefs, values, and identity of the Moravian Church.
- Maintain ties to the larger Moravian Church community and develop strategies regarding shared challenges or threats to the intangible cultural heritage of the Moravian Church including 'heritagisation', decontextualisation, commodification, and misrepresentation.

- Promote academic scholarship and contribute to the *MCS* research strategy.

The Group is expected to meet 2- 3 times per year and is composed of representatives of the Moravian Church administrations and local congregations of each component part, together with the overarching leadership of the Unity Board. The Chair is elected every year and rotates between the component parts.

Local World Heritage Management

At component part level, each settlement has a Site Manager/Coordinator and a local steering or local coordination group or equivalent comprising key stakeholders. This group takes responsibility for the Local Management Plan.

The Gracehill World Heritage Manager/ Coordinator

Partners to the World Heritage bid have agreed that there will be a local manager / coordinator for Gracehill. This post will be part time initially and will have the functions listed below.

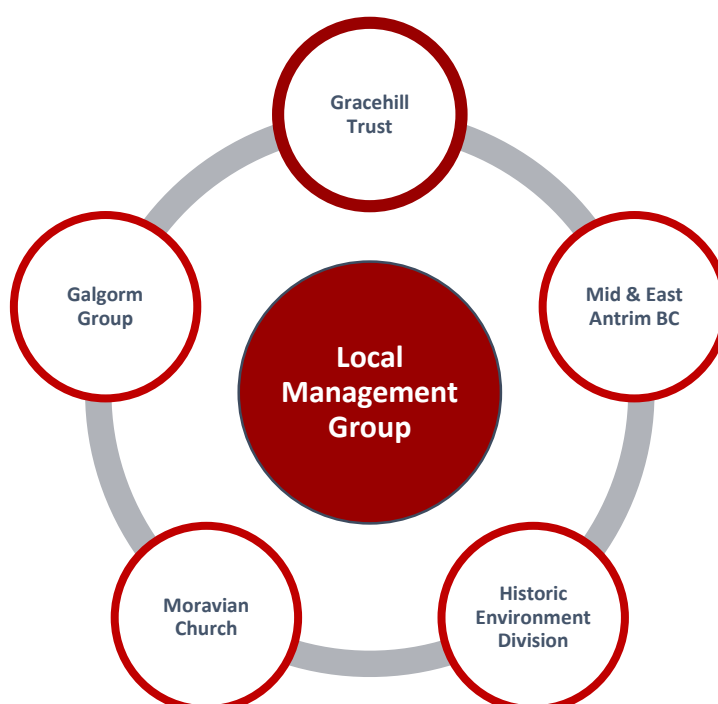
Should the nomination be successful the local management group will decide upon the most appropriate mechanism for the employment of this post. Funding for the Giants Causeway World Heritage manager is provided by the local management partners. The same is envisaged for Gracehill.

Manager functions:

- Focal point for coordination of management of Gracehill Component part.
- Encourage and facilitate progress on the actions of the Gracehill Local Management Plan.
- Monitoring and recording of statistics on the site.
- Compilation of reports on the site in line with UNESCO requirements.
- Produce an annual report on the management of the site.
- Promote and support interpretation of the site.
- Arrange and act as secretariat for the local management group.
- Represent Gracehill at Transnational Group Meetings.
- Maintain and develop contacts and cooperation with the managers of the rest of the Moravian Church Settlements World Heritage Site.
- Develop contacts with, and learn from, other WH managers in the UK and Ireland.

As with the overall site, the role and proactive involvement of the Moravian Church community is considered key to the sustainable long-term preservation, management, and conservation of the component part of Gracehill. The Manager will be expected to work closely with the Congregation and Minister in the delivery of these functions.

The Gracehill World Heritage Management Group (GWHMG)



The management group is composed of the stakeholders who came together to coordinate the Gracehill bid to UNESCO. It is envisaged that the group will meet at least quarterly to review the management of the site and set direction.

Members of the group are:

The Gracehill Trust – established in 2002 as the Gracehill Old School Trust (GhOST) this building preservation trust composed of local people has successfully managed the conservation and reuse of the Old School, and the former Post Office as well as the central square. It has also developed new walks to enhance the amenity of the village. The Trust has been the main body campaigning for World Heritage recognition since 2006.

Gracehill Moravian Church. A key property owner and fundamental to the intangible heritage of the village. It has been involved from an early stage in the development of the World Heritage bid.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. With responsibility for planning policy, Conservation Area management, building control and tourism policy for the Borough.

The Department for Communities. The Historic Environment Division of the Department is responsible for the designation of listed buildings and scheduled monuments. Its architects and archaeologists provide statutory advice to district councils on planning policy, development management applications and listed building consent applications affecting the historic environment. It has provided over half a million pounds in grant aid towards the conservation of listed buildings in the village since 1990. It is the government department responsible for heritage issues in Northern Ireland.

The Galgorm Group. This hotel and hospitality group owns a number of hotels and hospitality venues in the Ballymena area. As part of these functions, it is responsible for the management of the Galgorm Castle Estate opposite the proposed World Heritage Site, which it is currently drawing up plans to develop. It has wide experience of event management and has serviced parking facilities upon its land.

Other potential partners.

Should the nomination bid be successful then further potential members of the management group might be a representative of

Gracehill Primary School.

Education has been a key theme in the history of Gracehill with at one-point four schools within the village. The Primary School is a Moravian Transferee School and has had since its inception a close relationship with the Moravian Church and in recent years there has also been a good working relationship with Gracehill Trust. The school participates in events and activities *in the settlement*, but it is also a key stakeholder in the village, drawing in parents and guardians as well as children from a wide area.

Rivers Agency

A key stakeholder due to the river within the buffer of the proposed site and the potential to route visitors to the site over a new crossing from the Galgorm Castle Estate. It is also important that the Agency are sensitive to the OUV of the site when considering river management issues.

Objectives

The principles of Protection, Conservation, Presentation and Transmission as set out in the international management plan will help to guide local objectives. The main objective is to protect, conserve, oversee, and to sustainably develop the property and its Outstanding Universal Value in active cooperation with the Transnational Group and International Coordination Group.

Tasks.

These are set out in more detail in the rest of this document but include:

Coordination of the management of the Gracehill Component Part.

Conservation of the property: Monitoring the state of conservation of the site.

Periodic Reporting: Reports to the Transnational Group for review and forwarding to UNESCO according to article 29 of the World Heritage Convention

Reactive Monitoring: Providing information to the TNG about any developments or projects that may have an impact on the OUV of the property at the earliest possible moment.

Public Relations: Promoting and supporting the interpretation and presentation of Gracehill as a component part of the Moravian Settlements World Heritage Site.

Action Plan: The development of activities for Gracehill through an agreed action plan and their implementation.

Research: The promotion and coordination of research on Moravian Church Settlements as it applies to Gracehill.

Annual Report: To inform TNG about the state of conservation, management issues, its activities and the implementation of the International and the Local Management Plan.

Gracehill World Heritage Local Stakeholder Group.

The Local Management Group will hold an annual meeting with the local community of the site to ensure clarity and feedback on the management approach. The local stakeholder group will be identified from those who have expressed an interest in being kept informed on the management of the site and the annual meeting will be open to all who wish to attend. The Annual report will be prepared in time to share with local stakeholders at their annual meeting.

Section 4 Management Planning

The Gracehill Local Management Plan

Vision.

Mindful of the International Management Plan, the Gracehill community has agreed the following vision for their component part of the Moravian Church Settlements World Heritage Site.

'The Outstanding Universal Value of the Moravian Settlement of Gracehill will be protected, maintained, interpreted, and celebrated, in perpetuity, for the benefit and appreciation of all'.

Principles

Four principles have been developed to guide the achievement of this Vision.

Protection, - ensure that the site has appropriate and robust protection from change that might reduce the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site

Conservation, - ensure that the physical attributes of the site, its buildings, landscapes, and associated objects are well maintained .well maintained in accordance with conservation principles and best practice.

Presentation, - ensure that the site is well presented to locals and visitors in a way that clearly communicates its OUV and connection to the wider World Heritage Site and minimises negative impacts upon its character.

Transmission- ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value of the site is well researched, understood, celebrated and that this knowledge is enhanced and transferred to future generations.

Enhancement - ensure continued efforts to improve Gracehill's buildings and environment, and to optimise World Heritage status, for the benefit of its wider community.

International Aims.

The aims of the International Management plan will be supported:

- secure the long-term protection of the OUV of the Moravian Settlements WHS.
- build efficiently and sustainably on the longstanding successful management of the designated site, supplementing resources where necessary.
- build on transnational cooperation.
- carry out formal monitoring of the state of conservation of the World Heritage Site.
- Develop a consistent channel of communication for the Moravian Settlements WHS.

Key Actions

Key areas for action have been identified to help deliver the vision and align with the International Management Plan.

- Coordination
- Protection, Preservation and Conservation of the site's Tangible Heritage
- Protection and Conservation of the Moravian Archive of Ireland
- Preservation and Conservation of Intangible Heritage
- Communication
- Education
- Celebration
- Research
- Monitoring

Mitigation of Threats

Key threats to the site have also been isolated and mitigations considered.

- Sustainable Tourism Management
- Sustainable Development and environmental growth of the site
- Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation

Coordination

Clear communication between all involved is essential if the vision for the Gracehill component part of the World Heritage Site is to be delivered.

The three-tiered management framework of state party (International Coordination Group), transnational partners (Transnational Coordination Group and Moravian Church Transnational Advisory Group), and local management partners (Local Management Group and Local Stakeholder Group), has been described in detail above.

This is a complex arrangement reflecting a complex international site, but good relationships have developed and been built up during the nomination process. Meetings were held at all four component parts as the bid was developed and this was reinforced by monthly Zoom meetings of the Transnational Coordination Group. Regular meetings were also held between the local partners as the Gracehill part of the bid was refined.

The challenge is to ensure that these relationships continue once the designation has been made. The International Plan has made commitments in respect of the responsibilities and the frequency of meetings of the various groups and set out what they will do.

Objectives for local coordination

- Ensure strong long-term cooperation between partners to deliver the Gracehill vision.
- Ensure good long-term cooperation with transnational and state partners.
- Ensure strong awareness and good long-term cooperation with local stakeholders.

Actions to achieve objectives:

Action G1: Local Management Group for nomination process to create and constitute the Gracehill World Heritage Management Group (immediately after inscription)

Action G2: GWHMG to agree to progress the appointment of a part time local manager/ coordinator (within 6 months of inscription).

Action G3: GWHMG to provide representatives to attend Transnational Group Meetings.

Action G4: GWHMG to arrange and hold an annual meeting of the Local Stakeholder Group.

Resources Within ordinary budgets of members.

Protection, Preservation and Conservation of the site's tangible heritage.

Gracehill's physical heritage (its buildings, designed spaces and objects) has been well protected and preserved over many generations. Since the 1970s, when its principal buildings were protected as listed buildings and the village was protected as a conservation area, there have been many positive initiatives to conserve and enhance its character. A number of buildings have been carefully conserved, and some, such as the old school (Original Sister's House) and Post Office (Congregation Store) have been given sustainable new community-based uses. The church itself has been repaired, the central square has also been restored, overhead electric cables hidden underground and paths to God's Acre and around the village maintained and added. This work has been carried out by private owners, the Gracehill Trust and by Gracehill Moravian Church. Government support, both regional and local, National Lottery funding, charitable funding and private funds have supported this investment.

The standard of the work has been high and influenced by the publication of dedicated advice for the conservation area in 2004, the advice and guidance of the conservation architects of the Department for Communities Historic Environment Division, and by the grant requirements of funders like the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Moving forward, the need for the village to be maintained and presented to a high standard will only increase, should it become a component part of a larger World Heritage Site.

The Statement of OUV adopted by the World Heritage Committee upon inscription will be the main reference point for all actions relating to the component part of Gracehill in the future and all work carried out should be influenced by a clear understanding of these reasons among all stakeholders should form the basis of action.

The following objectives have been agreed for the protection, preservation and conservation of this site:

Objectives for Protection Preservation and Conservation

- The physical assets of the site, that contribute to its Outstanding Universal Value, are protected from inappropriate changes that might reduce or damage this
- Best practice maintenance regimes are adopted to preserve the site's OUV.
- The site is well conserved in a manner that supports its OUV and in line with internationally agreed conservation standards.

Actions to achieve objectives:

Protection

Gracehill's physical heritage is already protected by a strong suite of planning designations which have been in place for many years. The majority of the inscribed area is within a Conservation Area, except fields that extend from the open eastern side of The Square to the River Maine flood embankment.

This means that under the Planning Act (NI) 2011, the local planning authority must have 'special regard' to enhancing or preserving its character or appearance, where an opportunity to enhance does not exist, as an 'area of special architectural and historic interest' when considering planning applications.⁸ Its principal buildings have also been designated as listed buildings. Under the same Act, Listed Building Consent from the Planning Authority (Mid and East Antrim Borough Council) is required for any changes (inside or out) that might alter their 'special architectural or historic interest'⁹ It is a criminal offence to carry out work to alter a listed building without this consent. It is also a criminal offence to demolish any building within a conservation area without consent or to cut down any tree.

This legislative protection is supplemented by a suite of planning policies for the historic environment within the recently adopted Mid and East Antrim Local Development Plan 2030 - Plan Strategy (see pages 260-279 of the LDP). The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland contains strategic regional policy for the consideration of development proposals within World Heritage Sites (see page 15 above).

The Historic Environment Division of the Department for Communities is a statutory consultee in respect of planning and Listed Building Consent applications for change to listed buildings and their settings. Its advice to the District Council is based upon the policies of the LDP, the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and also upon the 'Conservation Principles' document published by the Department. This sets out publicly agreed principles for management of change to heritage assets which are in line with international standards¹⁰

If *Gracehill* is successful in being inscribed on the World Heritage List as a component part of *Moravian Church Settlements*, the Council has committed to developing a specific local planning policy which will be subject to public consultation before adoption. The new policy will complement the existing policy protection provided to the Conservation Area and its adoption will emphasise the international importance of the site and clarify planning policy associated with the site and buffer zone. It will allow the statement of OUV to be clearly taken into account in decision making.

Action G5: Mid and East Antrim Borough Council to introduce a new local planning policy into the Local Development Plan to incorporate the world heritage site boundary and buffer zone.

Despite planning protections, certain public bodies and utility companies are used to permitted development rights elsewhere or regard their regulations as vital to ensure public safety. It is important that such operatives are aware of the OUV of the village so that inappropriate signage, turning circles, cabling, substations, and phone masts do not get installed in the village without a clear assessment of their impact on its character and a consideration of how this impact might be mitigated.

Action G6: GWHMG to ensure that cable, gas, broadband, electric, and roads organisations, and their designers, are aware of the OUV of the village and its implications.

8. Section 104 (11) of the Planning Act (NI) 2011.

⁹ Section 85 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011.

¹⁰ Conservation Principles, Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment in Northern Ireland, DfC, 2023.

Archaeology

As recounted above, Gracehill was constructed on a ‘*substantially green-field agricultural site*’ in the 18th century and most of its original buildings survive as well as its plan. Archaeology can add to our knowledge, however, of how the buildings and the settlement evolved over time or of lesser-known parts of the story such as its industrial activity and the settlement’s archaeological potential is recognised through its identification on the Sites and Monuments Record for Northern Ireland. Two unusual land features have been identified at the river’s edge which would repay investigation to better understand their significance. These anomalies may be associated with the agricultural and industrial work of the settlement, or perhaps constitute remnants of the activity of earlier people along the riverside. On the opposite bank, McQuillan’s Castle, the viewpoint in an early drawing of the settlement, is a scheduled monument of great antiquity, about which little is definitively known. Under current planning processes the Historic Environment Division’s archaeologists are consulted when a proposal impacts upon an identified archaeological site or its setting. Scheduled Monument Consent from the Department is required for any works within the scheduled zone surrounding McQuillan’s Castle. If the new sites along the river were recorded and considered for inclusion on to the Sites and Monuments Record this would help ensure that any proposal for change in these areas would require consultation with HED archaeologists before being determined by the local planning authority (Mid and East Antrim Borough Council).

Action G7: DfC HED to consider if the features identified along the riverside should be included in the NI Sites and Monuments Record.

Maintenance

The importance of maintenance in the conservation of heritage assets cannot be overemphasised. Most of the damage that occurs to historic buildings and green spaces can be avoided by small scale regular *appropriate* maintenance. This can ensure an indefinite life for most elements and also protects historic authenticity. Inevitably, defects start as a small problem and grow in scale if not fixed. Key to the long-term preservation of a World Heritage Site, therefore, is maintenance.

Action G8: GWHMG to promote best practice maintenance regimes to stakeholders within the village through talks, demonstrations, and guidance.

Conservation

‘Conservation is the process of managing change to a heritage asset and/or its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage interest, and protect, conserve and enhance its significance for present and future generations.’¹¹ Irreparable damage can be caused to heritage assets by inexperienced and/or inadequate professional advice. Best practice as set out in HED Conservation Principles Guidance explains that work to repair heritage assets should be proportionate ensuring that the benefits outweigh any resulting harm or loss to an asset’s historic fabric or setting. New work should not confuse an understanding of its past, but rather reveal or reinforce its significance. It should respect the interest and setting of the asset. The quality of design, material, and execution should be such that it is valued both now and in the future.

¹¹ P12 Conservation Principles, DfC, 2023.

There is a good track record in Gracehill of careful conservation work, though in some places there are things like cement pointing of stonework, that would no longer be regarded as best practice. Moving forward, ensuring that best practice for conservation work is followed will be important in sustaining the OUV of the site.

Action G9: All stakeholders to commit to engage with appropriately qualified and experienced conservation advisers, that are aware of the reasons for the OUV, for any conservation work within the site.

Commitments to the International Management Plan.

The IMP has committed to develop and pilot common indicators to monitor protection, preservation, and conservation of the site. These are discussed in the later section on monitoring. It has also committed to 'exchanging experience and general capacity-building between component parts on conservation practices and conservation guidance.' This work will be developed by the site manager.

Historic Objects

Tangible heritage is also made up of historic objects associated with a place. No inventory has been carried out of the historic objects found in Gracehill outside of its Archive. Those directly linked to the settlement either as church objects, objects in private ownership, including machinery or tools, are an important part of the history of the place and contribute to its authenticity and interest. It is essential that there is an awareness of these objects and that owners understand this importance.

Action G10: GWHMG to commission an inventory of historic objects within the village that are linked to, or illustrate, its history as a Moravian Church Settlement.

Protection, Preservation and Conservation of the Moravian Archive

The Gracehill archive is key to understanding the OUV of the Gracehill Moravian settlement. It is a treasure trove of information about Gracehill but also about the church's activity all across Ireland. In that respect it is an important source of reference for researchers.

The archive is also a key evidence base to inform decision making about managing change within the designated site and within the buffer zone and provides an important reference to inform the interpretation and presentation of the site for visitors and tourists.

The archive maintains a strong relationship with archives in other component parts, particularly Herrnhut who have shared information they hold about the planning and development of Gracehill.

Objectives for Protection Preservation and Conservation of the Archive

- The Gracehill Archive is retained within the village and well catalogued and monitored.
- The Archive is maintained to best practice archival standards.
- Assets within the archive are well conserved.

Actions to achieve objectives:

Protection.

Work has already been carried out to catalogue the archive and a partnership has been developed with the Public Record Office of NI to help in its conservation. Links with the Historic Environment Record of NI, held by DfC, have also been established.

Action G11: Gracehill Moravian Church to ensure that the archive is fully catalogued.

The Archive is currently housed in a dedicated room and is safe and secure. However, its storage is not to optimum archival standards¹² although Initial work is underway.

Action G12: Gracehill Moravian Church to work with partners and funders to develop storage and access facilities that are fully compliant with current archival standards in respect of heat, light, humidity and fire protection.

While most of the archive is in remarkably good condition, there is an ongoing need for the careful conservation of historic documents. This work should be carried out to the highest standards to ensure the longevity of the collection and the retention of its authenticity as a historic artefact.

Action G13: Gracehill Moravian Church to work with partners and funders to develop a programme of conservation for archival records that complies with best international practice.

¹² For current best practice in archival standards see- xxxxxxx

Protection, Preservation and Conservation of Intangible Heritage

Intangible heritage is defined by UNESCO as: ‘the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity’¹³.

By its nature fragile, it is regarded by UNESCO as ‘an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity in the face of growing globalization.’¹⁴ It also argues that ‘the importance of intangible cultural heritage is not the cultural manifestation itself but rather the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted through it from one generation to the next.’¹⁵

In the context of the Moravian Settlements World Heritage Site and its competent part of Gracehill, it is the traditions, knowledge and skills of the Moravian Church which is the intangible heritage that contributes to the Outstanding Universal Value of the place. That is not to downplay, say, for example, the secular traditions or celebrations developed by the primary school or local sports or fishing clubs, but to note that these traditions are not associated with the Outstanding Universal Value of the component part.

In this regard, the Nomination document highlights ‘music, liturgical forms, and other distinct traditions, including the ‘Daily Watchwords’ (‘Losungen’), a practice started by Zinzendorf in 1728 and which was first printed in *Herrnhut* in 1731 to become an annual globally distributed publication of the Moravian Church’¹⁶ in its consideration of intangibles. With specific regard to Gracehill, it considers that it is ‘characterised by historical universal religious and political tolerance and support, notably neutrality and reconciliation first evidenced in the ‘United Irishmen Rebellion’ in 1798. Significant missionary activity is mostly associated with the Caribbean, with islands formerly part of the British West Indies (Jamaica, St Kitts, Barbados, Antigua, Trinidad and Tobago). There is a Grace Hill in Barbados and a Gracehill in Antigua.’¹⁷

If *Gracehill* is successful in being inscribed on the World Heritage List as a component part of *Moravian Church Settlements*, this heritage is likely to come under more scrutiny and potentially, pressure for change as the village seeks to facilitate increased visitor numbers. The inclusion of the Moravian advisory group at a Transnational level and Gracehill Church in the management group is, therefore, an important check, to ensure that this heritage is appropriately managed and developed.

¹³ UNESCO. The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003.

¹⁴ Introduction to Media Kit on 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, UNESCO, 2013. [Convention de 2003 pour la sauvegarde \(unesco.org\)](http://unesco.org)

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Moravian Church Settlements Nomination Document p64

¹⁷ Moravian Church Settlements Nomination Document p98

Objectives for Protection Preservation and Conservation of Gracehill's Intangible Heritage

- Gracehill Moravian Church continues to function as an active congregation in the village.
- The Church continues to utilise its historic meeting house and associated liturgical objects.
- The Church and its *practical theology and social understanding* continue to have a significant influence upon the life and times of the village.

Actions to achieve objectives:

Action G14: Gracehill Moravian Church to continue its work to evangelise and support its community though changing times.

Action G15: Gracehill Moravian Church to continue to develop its theology and liturgy in line with the worldwide Moravian Church while continuing to maintain and develop its traditions and church buildings.

Action G16: Gracehill Moravian Church to continue to form an active and unique part of the life of Gracehill Village and to support community activity.

Communication

The International Management Plan (IMP) says that: 'Communicating the significance of World Heritage to visitors and the local communities, in an effective and engaging way is part of the responsibilities of the site management¹⁸. It goes on to say that 'Communication is both an educational task and an information activity.' As a component part of a wider World Heritage Site, it is important that this is consistent with the rest of the World Heritage Site and helps to reinforce its unity. The IMP commits to the development of a common web portal and branding for the site, a joint 'inspiring' publication explaining the international site and its context, and a shared events timetable. These will all help to reinforce this unity and develop a clear context for local communications.

However, the Gracehill Trust has already done much to communicate the importance of the village. This includes the development of a long-standing website, the installation of plaques around the central square, the creation of a small museum in the old school with a series of information panels and displays, and the production of guide cards for visitors. It has also been active in communicating events like European Heritage Open Days, the availability of tours, and the progress towards nomination in the local media. The District Council also uses its offices to promote the site to visitors.

If *Gracehill* is successful in being inscribed on the World Heritage List as a component part of *Moravian Church Settlements*, communication of the accolade and of the Outstanding Universal Value of the site will become a key task. The more that people understand this, the more likely they are to visit and to respect this unique heritage. Communicating how to get here and where to park will also become an important activity.

Objectives for Communication

- Ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value of Gracehill is understood and valued.
- Ensure that the transnational nature of the World Heritage Site is clear.
- Ensure that visitors to the site are clear on how best to visit the site

Actions to achieve objectives:

Action G17: GWHMG to commission a communications plan to consider the appropriate marketing and presentation of the site in line with international commitments.

Action G18: GWHMG to ensure that signage, web and promotional material clearly explains the world heritage site and why it is considered to be of Outstanding Universal Value.

Action G19: GWHMG to ensure that consistent branding is adopted for signage, web and promotional material and that this in line with that agreed by the Transnational Management Group.

Action G20: GWHMG to ensure that signage, web and promotional material are clear on visitor directions and facilities.

Education

¹⁸ Moravian Church Settlements, International Management Plan, p 50.

This carries on from communication work. As the IMP says 'Education plays a central role for sustainable management of the World Heritage Site. This means presenting value and significance to a broad public in order to make them aware of the need for protection and conservation, to make people understand the importance of the World Heritage programme and the protection of World Heritage sites worldwide, and to fully inform the public about the threats to this heritage and the measures taken in mitigation under the Convention.¹⁹'

Gracehill Moravian Church has a long tradition of education, and the current Gracehill Primary School is the successor of the various Gracehill schools. It is a Moravian Church Transferee School with the Church having rights to nominate Governors to sit on the Governing Body. There have been very close relationships between the Church and the Primary School since its inception in 1863. The Minister visits the school regularly and the School use the Church grounds and church for various activities and likewise the Church use the school building and grounds. The Gracehill Trust also has links with the local primary school and actively encourages local schools and other groups to visit the village where the history of the site and its neutral legacy in a divided region are explained. The international connections are also highlighted but will have increased prominence should the site become inscribed.

The opportunity to use Gracehill to increase understanding of World Heritage and its principles will also follow from inscription. The International Management Plan has stated that this will be grasped at all of the component parts.

Education, of course, is not just school trips and the communication tools of signage and publications discussed in the previous section. Education can also be gleaned from lectures and talks or a sharing of research on the site as it develops. It can be presented in person, included in a curriculum, or posted online as videos or social media.

All Moravian settlements have a strong affinity to ideas of education for all. The maintenance/ rediscovery of the idea that Gracehill is a place of learning can be reinforced by the events it hosts, research it carries out, and links it makes to institutions such as the Moravian University in Bethlehem.

Objectives for Education

- Ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value of Gracehill is understood by all stakeholders
- Communicate the Outstanding Universal Value of Moravian Church Settlements to as many people as possible.
- Develop the reputation of Gracehill as a place of learning.

Actions to achieve objectives:

Action G21: GWHMG to arrange a seminar for all stakeholders explaining the Outstanding Universal Value of Gracehill and the implications of this.

Action G22: Gracehill Trust to continue to provide educational tours and talks to schools and visitors.

Action G23: GWHMG to arrange seminars and a lecture programme reporting on the site and related issues (such as reconciliation, town planning or music) and on developments with the international partners.

¹⁹Moravian Church Settlements, International Management Plan, p52.

Celebration.

Gracehill is good at bringing its community together for events throughout the year. These may be related to Church activities or be arranged by the Gracehill Trust or the Primary School, but they are an important way of building and sustaining a community and in sharing this with others. Should the site become a component part of the World Heritage Site, such activity could be a good way of delivering the education and communication ideals mentioned above or of attracting visitors. Celebrating what we have is also a very positive way to appreciate and enjoy our surroundings, bringing wellbeing benefits and a sense of belonging.

To many or too noisy events could, in contrast, have negative impacts upon the amenity and enjoyment of the village. There may also be an increased interest from private operators in arranging events such as product launches or videos in the village after inscription following increased awareness of NI's first Cultural World Heritage Site.

Objectives for Celebration

- That the full potential to understand and enjoy the site through public events is realised.
- That events chosen are fun but help to reinforce and not detract from the site's OUV.

Actions to achieve objectives:

Action G24: GWHMG to work together to arrange, support and deliver an annual programme of events within the village.

Action G25: GWHMG to monitor and consider if there is a need to licence or manage events proposed by others within the village as a result of the inscription and how this might be enacted and co-ordinated.

Research

Much research has been carried out on Gracehill as part of the preparation of the Nomination Document – the field boundary research to inform the buffer zone (image), the extra information about the former Inn on the square the sharing of early maps and plans from the Herrnhut Archive, have all helped to expand and deepen knowledge about the village. There is always more to learn as evidenced by recently obtained LiDAR scans of Gracehill and its surrounding landscape which helps illustrate the time depth of the landscape. The weekly diaries of the Moravian Ministers have much to share on life in this part of County Antrim from 1722 and are only partly investigated. The extensive missions from Gracehill to the Caribbean have been mentioned in the Nomination Document but much more remains to be found out about this. The links with the other component parts and other Moravian settlements which appear to have been extensive, with ministers and other representatives traveling between these, also have to be fully investigated.

The International Management Plan points out that ‘research plays a critical role for the understanding, interpretation, and sustainable preservation of the tangible and intangible heritage of Moravian Church Settlements,’²⁰ and it is true that the most appropriate decisions for change are often based upon good knowledge and understanding. If the OUV is to be preserved, it is important, therefore, that there is a high level of understanding of the site.

The International Management plan also points out the importance of wider research on the Moravian Church to deepen an understanding of the OUV of the World Heritage Site. It proposes cooperation between the component parts to develop a research strategy and an improved alignment of academic research and exchange.

Objectives for Research

- That the full potential to understand and enjoy the site, because of research, is realised.
- The international connections of the site are fully understood.
- That Gracehill supports the Transnational group by contributing to research on Moravian Church Settlements.

Actions to achieve objectives:

Action G26: GWHMG to identify potential areas for research on Gracehill, in cooperation with academic researchers, and seek opportunities to support and deliver this work.

Action G27: GWHMG to contribute to IMP aims to: create an inventory of potential sources; develop a strategy to digitise archival materials; and develop a transnational research strategy.

²⁰ Moravian Church Settlements, International Management Plan, p54.

Monitoring

The International Management Plan explains that monitoring by UNESCO is one of the key parts of the World Heritage Convention. Every six years a report must be submitted to the World Heritage Committee on the site. UNESCO’s operational guidelines explain that the purpose of this reporting is so that they can have: ‘a) an assessment of the application of the World Heritage Convention by the State Party; b) an assessment as to whether the Outstanding Universal Value of the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List is being maintained over time; c) to provide up-dated information about the World Heritage properties to record the changing circumstances and state of conservation of the properties; d) to provide a mechanism for regional cooperation and exchange of information and experiences between States Parties concerning the implementation of the Convention and World Heritage conservation.’²¹ UNESCO also require state parties to report more promptly if they consider that a site is under threat.

To ensure that any potential threats are picked up early, the International Management Plan commits that an annual report will be compiled by the Transnational Coordination Group for consideration by the Intergovernmental Committee.²² This report will relate to headline themes of:

- 1, State of Conservation,
2. Use and Function and
3. External Pressure.

The report will be limited to reporting on a set of indicators agreed by the Transnational Coordination Group and included in the International Management Plan. These are reproduced below. In Gracehill, this data will need to be collected from partners and stakeholders and compiled annually. The work will be a key task of the Local manager/ coordinator. Potential to add further datasets will be kept under review.

Action G28: GWHMG will set up a local management database / spreadsheet to ensure that annual data is recorded and retained in a clear way.

Action G29: GWHMG to ensure that the indicators required by the Transnational Coordination Group for its annual reporting are compiled from relevant sources in a timely manner and made available as required.

Monitoring category 1 State of Conservation

Table 1 Monitoring Required by the International Management Plan

Key indicator	Periodicity	Location of records
A1 Number of buildings that need significant ²³ repair or restoration	Annually	Local Management System
A2 Number of buildings that have been restored ²⁴	Annually	Local Management System

²¹ Para 201, p63, Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, UNESCO, Sept 2023.

²² see above pages xx-xx for definitions.

²³ ‘Significant’ is understood to be work that is urgently required to ensure the watertightness or stability of a building.

²⁴ List buildings that have had repair work carried out during year as well as buildings with more significant interventions.

Key indicator	Periodicity	Location of records
A3 Developments ²⁵ within the nominated property and buffer zone	Continually	Local Management System
A4 Condition of God's Acre, Square, green spaces and pathways	Annually	Local Management System, Moravian Church

Monitoring category 2 Use and Function

Key indicator	Periodicity	Location of records
B1 Change of use of buildings, and buildings lacking a sustainable function	Annually	Local Management System
B2 Number of members of the Moravian Church	5 years	Gracehill Moravian Church
B3 Number of buildings owned by the Moravian Church or its associated bodies	5 years	Gracehill Moravian Church
B4 Number of buildings owned by the Trust and private owners	5 years	Local Management System
B5 Number of residents within the nominated property	5 years	Local Management System and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

Monitoring category 3 External Pressure

Key indicator	Periodicity	Location of records
Visitor statistics ²⁶	Annually	Local Management System
Traffic counts	Annually	Local Management System
Parking capacity ²⁷	Annually	Local Management System
Need for buildings and other developments ²⁸	Annually	Local Management System
Need for utilities or service infrastructure ²⁹	Annually	Local Management System
Risks of climate change and severe weather events, including flooding fire ³⁰	Annually	Local Management System

²⁵ 'developments' should include not just interventions that require planning permission, but work carried out under permitted development rights such as the installation of a broadband communications box or an agricultural shed.

²⁶ The Management Group should agree a consistent way of recording visitor statistics.

²⁷ Record car parking capacity in the village as well as the total parking capacity available in signposted visitor parking.

²⁸ Record estimated demand for housing provision in the local District Electoral Area. Record total number of planning applications in DEA.

²⁹ Record % of houses in village with a broadband connection. Record if water and sewage system in village is considered reasonable and able to cope with demands.

³⁰ Record: flood risk assessment for village; number of severe weather events in village (severe as defined by Met Office); no of fires as a result of climate (hot dry conditions, lightning etc) in village and buffer zone.

Invasive/alien species or hyper-abundant species ³¹	2 years	Local Management System
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³¹ Record number and extent of invasive species such as Giant Knotweed or Deathwatch Beetle in village and buffer zone to the extent that is possible (the key issue is to be consistent so that trends over time can be monitored).

Potential Threats to the Outstanding Universal Value of Gracehill

The following potential threats to the OUV of the site have been identified:

- Tourism
- Sustainable development and environmental growth of the site
- Climate Change Impacts

Tourism

Becoming the first cultural World Heritage Site in Northern Ireland and the fifth World Heritage Site on the island of Ireland is likely to attract visitors. When new UNESCO World Heritage Sites have been inscribed in the past, the areas see an influx of visitors as a direct result. Other sites have reported this lasting around 1.5 to 2 years before visitor numbers level out to a more consistent pace. Gracehill village currently sees around 20,000³² visitors per year. It is considered that this could swell to around 60,000 before settling at around double the original numbers. If realised this would mean around 40,000 visitors to the Gracehill village area each year.

At present the village is jammed with cars each afternoon during the school term as parents pick up their children from the primary school. Arguably detracting from the character and peace of the village at peak times, an extra influx visitors could easily be detrimental to the operation of the village and to the presentation and understanding of the OUV of the site. If the visitor experience is not fully thought through and ready for the rise in attention should the site become inscribed in July 2024, there is also a real risk that negative publicity could result that would be off-putting for locals and visitors alike. This would diminish the potential of the village to share the values of World Heritage, share understanding of the Moravian Church Settlements transnational site, and add to the tourism economy of Mid and East Antrim.

The Nomination Document notes that an approach to sustainable visitor management is envisaged for the site and that this will be: *'Short-term. Encouragement for booked guided tours, parking at the nearby Galgorm Estate. Medium-term. Establishment of a visitor reception centre outside the nominated property. Most visitors are likely to come by car or bus, but there are no proposals for increased visitor parking in the village. Pressure instead will be mitigated through sustainable visitor management proposals which will integrate underutilised existing capacity nearby with a short pedestrian route connecting to the village.'*³³

Objectives for Tourism

- That visits are managed in a sustainable way that do not harm the normal use of the site by villagers or the appreciation of the OUV of the site by all.
- That visitors receive an excellent visitor experience that allows them to understand and appreciate Moravian Life and the Outstanding Universal Value of this component part of the Moravian Church Settlements World Heritage Site.
- That the potential to utilise visitors to generate an income stream to help maintain the site is fully explored and realised.

³² These visitor numbers are based on footfall through the restaurant which is located at the project site. No 'official' visitor numbers are currently available.

³³ Moravian Church Settlements Nomination Document p 216.

Actions to achieve objectives:

Action G30: GWHMG to develop, agree and implement a phased visitor management plan for the site that accounts for an expected initial jump in visitor numbers in time for the announcement of a decision by UNESCO on World Heritage status.

Action G31: GWHMG to consider and develop ways to generate a sustainable income from visitors to support the maintenance of the OUV of the site.

Sustainable Development and Environmental Growth of the Site

The Draft Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland³⁴ highlights that the province faces a range of environmental challenges, including habitat and species loss, greenhouse gas emissions, climate change, waste management, a need to improve soil and air quality, and to develop a sustainable circular economy that reduces this impact. All these challenges are faced at a local level by Gracehill.

UNESCO is also keen to ensure that World Heritage Sites contribute to sustainable development. In 2015 it adopted a Policy for the Integration of a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention:³⁵ 'In addition to protecting the OUV of World Heritage properties, States Parties should, recognise and promote the properties' inherent potential to contribute to all dimensions of sustainable development and work to harness the collective benefits for society, also by ensuring that their conservation and management strategies are aligned with broader sustainable development objectives.'

This aligned UNESCO's activity with the wider United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which are a call for action by all countries to promote prosperity while protecting the planet.

The NI Environment Strategy Green Improvement Plan contains six outcomes, consistent with the UN SDGs, to which the WHS Management Plan for Gracehill could potentially contribute:

Outcome 1.- Excellent air, water land and neighbourhood quality.

Outcome 2 – Healthy Environment and landscapes we can enjoy.

Outcome 3 –Thriving connected and resilient nature and wildlife.

Outcome 4 – Production and Consumption that doesn't damage the environment.

Outcome 5 – Zero waste and a highly developed circular economy.

Outcome 6 – Fair contribution to net zero greenhouse gas emissions and improved climate resilience and adaptability.

Objectives for Sustainable Development and Environmental Growth

- That Gracehill's natural environment is well-cared for and can be enjoyed by all.
- That the historic field boundaries are conserved or reinstated.
- That the site operates as a circular economy where production and consumption are balanced as much as possible i.e low overall demand for raw materials, reduced waste generation and use of things that retain value throughout their entire life cycle.
- That greenhouse gas emissions from the site are minimised.

Actions to achieve objectives:

Action G32: GWHMG to develop, agree and implement a biodiversity plan for the village to ensure that the flora and fauna native to the site are appreciated and sustained.

³⁴ [Environment Strategy Consultation | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(daera-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)

³⁵ [World Heritage Centre - World Heritage and Sustainable Development \(unesco.org\)](https://whc.unesco.org/)

Action G33: GWHMG/ to develop a traffic management & active travel strategy for the village, working with Mid and East Antrim BC, Rivers Agency and DfI Roads to contribute to expanding greenways and walking/cycle routes.

Action G34 GWHMG to commission research into the risks arising from Climate Change on designed landscape features and distinctive flora, such as lime trees and the Montgomery Oak so that appropriate mitigations can be considered and undertaken.

Action G35 GWHMG to champion the development of a circular economy in the village though highlighting actions and changes that can be undertaken by all to reduce waste and extend the life of goods.

Climate Change

Directly linked to the preceding section, Climate Change is an increasing issue for everyone. The Met Offices' UK Climate Predictions (UKCP) 2018 provide the latest projections of change, as a result of this, for Northern Ireland. If high emissions continue there is expected to be an:

- increase in mean winter temperature very likely to be between 0.1-2.2 °C by 2060-2079
- increase in mean summer temperature very likely to be between 0.0-2.8 °C by 2060-2079
- change in winter mean precipitation very likely to be between -3% drier to 17% wetter by 2060-2079
- change in summer mean precipitation very likely to be between 28% drier to 6% wetter by 2060-2079

These changes are likely to have significant implications for all heritage assets in Northern Ireland. It will probably speed up and exacerbate many decay mechanisms. Impacts are expected³⁶ to include:

- structural damage to heritage assets.
- the undermining of structures.
- loss of coastal heritage through rising sea levels.
- the exposure and erosion of archaeological sites.
- the collapse of unstable masonry elements.
- the loss of some historic landscape features.
- the decay of building fabric caused by increased saturation.
- microbiological growth in interiors and
- increased corrosion of metal elements.

There may also be a risk posed by responses to the issue, such as inappropriate energy efficiency or rainfall adaptation or even inadvertent damage in response to threats like fire or flood. Gracehill will not be immune from any of this.

Luckily, with improvement works carried out on the nearby river there is no significant threat of flooding in the village, the updated Flood Risk Assessment³⁷ for the river Maine identifies that the vulnerable areas do not impact on the proposed WHS. Enhanced flood protection will not be an issue for the Site, although it may need to be taken into consideration in the design and development of any interpretation and access infrastructure proposed on the Galgorm Estate on the opposite bank of the river.

Issues of increased fires is also likely to be low, but heavy sudden rainfall is an increasing threat across NI. This is likely to become a significant issue in Gracehill and will test the rainwater removal systems across the village and increase the need to ensure clean gutters and unblocked gullies. The village is in a relatively sheltered location and driving rain though stonework is unlikely to become a significant problem. Buildings may still, however, become

³⁶ [Heritage and Climate Change | Department for Communities \(communities-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/heritage-and-climate-change)

³⁷

more saturated as they will have less time to dry out and may become more prone to microbiological growth in interiors.

UNESCO are currently updating their 2007 UNESCO Policy on Climate Change³⁸ but their draft Policy focusses on safeguarding Outstanding Universal Value, and on the role World Heritage can play not only in managing the impacts of climate change but also in mitigating change. There is growing recognition of the need for World Heritage properties to be examples of good environmental practices, notably by using new environmentally friendly and low-emission technologies.

There are two standard approaches taken to address the threats posed by climate change: tackling the problem at source by reducing carbon emissions; and taking preventative action to mitigate the impacts of the changed weather conditions.

Objectives to Mitigate the impact of Climate Change on Gracehill

- That the likely impact of climate change on Gracehill World Heritage Site component part and its buffer zone is well understood.
- That the potential of the site to reduce carbon emissions is fully realised.
- That negative impacts of climate change, or of climate change adaptation, on the Outstanding Universal Value of the site are minimised.

Actions to achieve objectives:

Action G36: GWHMG to commission research into the expected impact of climate change on the village of Gracehill.

Action G37: GWHMG to host a talk on how impacts from climate change on the village might be reduced and carbon reductions achieved without damaging the OUV of the site.

Action G38: Gracehill Trust, Moravian Church and other stakeholders to review carbon emissions from their property and consider how this might be minimised while still maintaining their contribution to the sites' OUV.

Action G39 Gracehill Trust, Moravian Church and other stakeholders to review expected climate change impacts upon their property and consider how this might be minimised while still maintaining their contribution to the sites' OUV.

³⁸[World Heritage Centre - Climate Change and World Heritage \(unesco.org\)](http://www.unesco.org)

Section 5 Review and revision

Review

This plan will be reviewed every five years. The Management Group may decide to review and revise actions in response to changes on site.

Revision

In the event of a successful inscription (2024), the first updated plan will be developed and approved in 2029.

Section 6 Contacts

Section 7 Signatures

In the event of a successful inscription (2024), the *Moravian Church Settlements – Gracehill* Local Management Plan will be adopted and implemented.

The LMP is signed by all key stakeholders to signal their firm commitment to the responsibilities that accompany inscription on the World Heritage List.



Gracehill Moravian Church



Dept. of Communities



Mid & East Antrim BC



Gracehill Trust.

Appendix 1. Summary of Management Actions.

Number	Action	Delivery date
Action G1	Local Management Group for nomination process to create and constitute the Gracehill World Heritage Management Group (immediately after inscription)	July 2024
Action G2	GWHMG to agree and appoint a part time local manager/ coordinator (within 6 months of inscription).	December 2024
Action G3	GWHMG to provide representatives to attend Transnational Group Meetings.	July 2024
Action G4	GWHMG to arrange and hold an annual meeting of the Local Stakeholder Group.	July 2025
Action G5	Mid and East Antrim Borough Council to introduce a new local planning policy into the Local Development Plan to incorporate the world heritage site boundary and buffer zone.	July 2025
Action G6	GWHMG to ensure that cable, gas, broadband, electric, and roads organisations, and their designers, are aware of the OUV of the village and its implications	July 2025
Action G7	DfC HED to consider if the features identified along the riverside should be included in the NI Sites and Monuments Record.	September 2024
Action G8	GWHMG to promote best practice maintenance regimes to stakeholders within the village through talks, demonstrations, and guidance.	July 2025
Action G9	All stakeholders to commit to engage with appropriately qualified and experienced conservation advisers, that are aware of the reasons for the OUV, for any conservation work within the site.	July 2025
Action G10	GWHMG to commission an inventory of historic objects within the village that are linked to, or illustrate, its history as a Moravian Church Settlement.	July 2025
Action G11	Gracehill Moravian Church to ensure that the archive is fully catalogued.	July 2027
Action G12	Gracehill Moravian Church to work with partners and funders to develop storage and	July 2027

	access facilities that are fully compliant with current archival standards in respect of heat, light, humidity and fire protection.	
Action G13	Gracehill Moravian Church to work with partners and funders to develop a programme of conservation for archival records that complies with best international practice.	July 2027
Action G14	Gracehill Moravian Church to continue its work to evangelise and support its community though changing times.	Ongoing
Action G15	Gracehill Moravian Church to continue to develop its theology and liturgy in line with the worldwide Moravian Church while continuing to maintain and develop its traditions and church buildings	Ongoing
Action G16	Gracehill Moravian Church to continue to form an active and unique part of the life of Gracehill Village and to support community activity.	Ongoing
Action G17	GWHMG to commission a communications plan to consider the appropriate marketing and presentation of the site in line with international commitments.	July 2024
Action G18	GWHMG to ensure that signage, web and promotional material clearly explains the world heritage site and why it is considered to be of Outstanding Universal Value.	July 2025
Action G19:	GWHMG to ensure that consistent branding is adopted for signage, web and promotional material and that this in line with that agreed by the Transnational Management Group.	July 2025
Action G20	GWHMG to ensure that signage, web and promotional material are clear on visitor directions and facilities.	July 2025
Action G21	GWHMG to arrange a seminar for all stakeholders explaining the Outstanding Universal Value of Gracehill and the implications of this.	July 2025
Action G22	Gracehill Trust to continue to provide educational tours and talks to schools and visitors.	Ongoing
Action G23:	GWHMG to arrange seminars and a lecture programme reporting on the site and related issues (such as reconciliation, town planning or music) and on developments with the international partners.	July 2025
Action G24	GWHMG to work together to arrange, support and deliver an annual programme of events within the village	July 2025
Action G25	GWHMG to monitor and consider if there is a need to licence or manage events proposed by others within the village as a result of the	July 2025

	inscription and how this might be enacted and co-ordinated.	
Action G26	GWHMG to identify potential areas for research on Gracehill, in cooperation with academic researchers, and seek opportunities to support and deliver this work.	July 2025
Action G27	GWHMG to contribute to IMP aims to: create an inventory of potential sources; develop a strategy to digitise archival materials; and develop a transnational research strategy.	Ongoing
Action G28	GWHMG will set up a local management database / spreadsheet to ensure that annual data is recorded and retained in a clear way.	March 2025
Action G29	GWHMG to ensure that the indicators required by the Transnational Coordination Group for its annual reporting are compiled from relevant sources in a timely manner and made available as required.	June 2025
Action G30	GWHMG to develop, agree and implement a phased visitor management plan for the site that accounts for an expected initial jump in visitor numbers in time for the announcement of a decision by UNESCO on World Heritage status.	June 2024
Action G31	GWHMG to consider and develop ways to generate a sustainable income from visitors to support the maintenance of the OUV of the site.	July 2025
Action G32	GWHMG to develop, agree and implement a biodiversity plan for the village to ensure that the flora and fauna native to the site are appreciated and sustained.	July 2026
Action G33	GWHMG/ to develop a traffic management & active travel strategy for the village, working with Mid and East Antrim BC to contribute to expanding greenways and walking/cycle routes.	July 2025
Action G34	GWHMG to commission research into the risks arising from Climate Change on designed landscape features and distinctive flora, such as lime trees and the Montgomery Oak so that appropriate mitigations can be considered and undertaken.	July 2026
Action G35	Action G35 GWHMG to champion the development of a circular economy in the village though highlighting actions and changes that can be undertaken by all to reduce waste and extend the life of goods.	July 2026

Action G36	GWHMG to commission research into the expected impact of climate change on the village of Gracehill.	July 2026
Action G37	GWHMG to host a talk on how impacts from climate change on the village might be reduced and carbon reductions achieved without damaging the OUV of the site.	July 2026
Action G38	Gracehill Trust, Moravian Church and other stakeholders to review carbon emissions from their property and consider how this might be minimised while still maintaining their contribution to the sites' OUV.	July 2027
Action G39	Gracehill Trust, Moravian Church and other stakeholders to review expected climate change impacts upon their property and consider how this might be minimised while still maintaining their contribution to the sites' OUV.	July 2027