



The "Global Heritage Stone Resource": Past, Present and Future

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The "Global Heritage Stone Resource" designation arose in 2007 as a suggested mechanism to enhance international recognition of famous dimension stones. There were also many aspects of dimension stone study that had no formal recognition in mainstream geology and which could be recognised in a formal geological sense via an internationally acceptable geological standard. Such a standard could also receive recognition by other professionals and the wider community. From the start, it was appreciated that active quarrying would an important aspect of the designation so a designation different to any other standard was needed. Also the project was linked to the long-established Commission C-10 Building Stone and Ornamental Rocks of the International Association of Engineering Geology and the Environment (IAEG C-10).

Since 2007, the "Global Heritage Stone Resource" (GHSR) proposal has evolved in both in stature and purpose due to an increasing number of interested international correspondents that were actively sought via conference participation. The "English Stone Forum" in particular was pursuing similar aims and was quick to advise that English dimension stone types were being recognised as having international, national or regional importance. Furthermore the proposed designation was suggested as to having significant value in safeguarding designated stone types whilst also providing a potential mechanism in preventing heritage stone replacement by cheap substitutes. During development it also became apparent that stone types having practical applications such as roofing slates and millstones or even stone types utilised by prehistoric man can also be recognised by the new designation. The heritage importance of architects was also recognised. Most importantly an international network evolved, primarily including geologists, that now seems to be the largest international grouping of dimension stone professionals. This has assisted the project to affiliate with the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) in 2011 as its Heritage Stone Task Group (HSTG).

The future is likely to hold further surprises. There could be benefits in establishing a permanent organisation or "Commission" within IUGS. There may also be value in preparing and maintaining an "International Guide to Heritage Stone Designation" that considers, not only those stone types that have international significance, but also those of national, regional and local importance. It is now considered that all dimension stone types may be considered a "potential heritage stone". Publications of all types that describe, discuss and promote nominated stone types will be beneficial. For good administration of the designation, the current HSTG "Terms of Reference" will likely require revision. For the immediate future, the major effort should focus on preparing and approving GHSR nominations. Over time the focus will likely move onto promoting community recognition of the designation, protecting recognised GHSRs and revising the existing heritage status of designated stones.