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Heritage Management Policy

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1. Introduction

A tourist railway that operates old equipment is not a museum unless, among other things, it manages its collection of railways rolling stock and infrastructure according to internationally recognised standards for the conservation of heritage objects and places.

OTHR has adopted conservation guidelines for an operational heritage railway based on the model adopted by the Federation of European Museum and Tourist Railways (FEDECRAIL) in 2005. This model was called the Riga Charter named after the capital city of Latvia where the initiative was first discussed. The Riga Charter provides heritage conservation guidelines designed specifically for operational railway museums.

2. The Riga Charter

The Riga Charter is a statement of principles, which guide the conservation, restoration, maintenance, and repair, and use of historic railway equipment which is being operated. The purpose of this charter is to assist OTHR to make wise decisions regarding restoration and operation of a heritage railway.

3. Definitions

Heritage Railways: referred to in this application of the Charter relates to historic or preserved railways and may extend to heritage trains operating on the state network and other railways.

Railway Equipment: referred to in this Charter may include buildings or infrastructure which form part of the railway ensemble.

Preservation: is the process of keeping an object safe from harm and decomposition, by maintaining it properly so that its condition, quality, and memory are retained.

Conservation: is the process of stabilising the condition of an object without compromising the historical or material evidence in any way.

Restoration: is the process of repairing or replacing missing parts in an attempt to regain an earlier state of the object. The restoration may increase the strength of the object before work started and may generally go further than conservation. It should neither be invisible or glaringly obvious.

Repair: is the process of adjustment or replacement of the components. The specified standard of mechanical condition is achieved irrespective of the historic integrity of parts that may be altered or discarded.



4. Articles of Charter

Article 1.

Scientific and technical skills, together with the facilities needed to preserve and operate historic railway equipment, within a culture of safety, should be used to safeguard railway heritage.

Article 2

The aim of preserving and restoring historic railway items and associated working practices is to safeguard them, whether they are significant technological artefacts, evidence for transport history or a means of perpetuating traditional skills.

Article 3

Maintenance of all aspects of their equipment, and operation on a regular basis is essential for the survival of heritage railways. Operating historic and valuable railway equipment with traditional operating procedures, and presenting it to the public, is an important means of interpreting that material.

Article 4

Identifying socially useful purposes for historic railway items will help facilitate their preservation, but such use should involve the minimum change necessary, and such changes should be fully reversible.

Article 5

A heritage railway should reflect not only the importance of its own role as a transport system, but also when appropriate, its own historic origins and its impact on the community it serves.

Article 6

The process of restoration is a highly specialised operation. Its aim is to preserve and reveal the aesthetic, functional and historic value of traditional railway equipment. It should be based on respect and an understanding wherever possible of the original designs and specifications.

Article 7

The original or historically correct materials and techniques should be used in the conservation of historic railway items, unless they can no longer be adopted for reasons of safety, legislation, or availability. In such cases appropriate contemporary substitutes for such materials or techniques should be used.

Article 8

The restoration of a piece of historic railway equipment does not require that it must be restored to its original as built state. Some equipment acquires its historic importance later on in its working life. Restoration to any period should be executed only after thorough consideration of historic records, and available documentation covering the chosen period, after which a restoration plan should be written and adopted. Material that is replaced with new should be readily identified as such with a simple permanent marking system.

Engineering Management

Asset Management



Article 9

Added mandatory safety equipment should if possible, blend harmoniously with the conserved or restored item but the fact that it is an addition or alteration to the original make-up of the item should be clearly indicated.

Article 10

Any other necessary later modifications to the items that are introduced for whatever reason should be as sympathetic as possible to the make-up and appearance of the original item. Ideally any such modification should be reversible, and any significant original parts removed should be retained for possible future re-use.

Article 11

Every stage in the conservation or restoration work on an historic railway item should be systematically planned and recorded. The resultant record of these processes retained for a minimum of the life of the item.

Article 12

All bodies involved in the repair, restoration, maintenance, conservation and operation of heritage railways and railway equipment must make proper arrangements for the conservation of their records and archives.