

Bath bids for rare UNESCO status

Bath's bid for a rare double-listing as a World Heritage Site, ranking it alongside cities like Bruges and Barcelona, will be made to UNESCO on 31 January.

The city is joining ten other European spa towns in seeking UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) recognition for their role as leading historic spa towns which changed the culture of Europe.

The group includes Spa in Belgium, Vichy in France and Baden Baden in Germany which all developed as open air resorts, providing beautiful surroundings and a thermal water cure for the benefit of visitors.

If the bid, put forward by the International Great Spas of Europe project, is successful Bath would be the only double-nominated World Heritage Site in the UK.

Councillor Paul Myers, cabinet member for Economic and Community Regeneration said: "UNESCO World Heritage status remains the most prestigious and highly coveted accolade bestowed on any heritage site and marks a place as being of global significance. If Bath is successful and awarded a rare double-listing it will rank alongside such cities as Barcelona and Bruges, raising global awareness of the city and giving it a distinct tourism marketing edge."

Ahead of the nomination to UNESCO, Bath & North East Somerset Council is hosting a workshop with representatives from the partner European sites on 24 and 25 January. They will explore how to maximise opportunities created by UNESCO recognition and capitalise on the growing market for wellness tourism.

The nomination to UNESCO will be made on 31 January and a result should be known in mid-2020.