

In Search of OUV: A Methodology for Attribute Mapping in the Circular Villages of the Wendland

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1. The circular villages (Rundlinge) in the Wendland: a historic settlement landscape

In the Hanoverian Wendland, located in the district of Lüneburg-Dannenberg in Lower Saxony, a distinctive village typology of axially arranged circular villages (*Rundlinge*) has been preserved, which forms a settlement landscape of high cultural importance and of potential Outstanding Universal Value. The authentic remains of a settlement landscape of rural character and a characteristic village typology, represent a significant cultural property of the region, which is predestined for a recognition on the UNESCO World Heritage List. These circular villages of the Hanoverian Wendland form the largest concentration of continuously occupied, radially designed settlements within Central and Eastern Europe. Exclusively preserved in this area, the *Rundling* villages are

outstanding examples of a historic settlement landscape of axially arranged planned settlements and of the specific typology of a coherent and homogenous cohesive axial disposition scheme with centralised alignment of the village. In the authors' view, these characteristics can be considered an outstanding example of a traditional form of settlement.

Around a central open village square, all constitutive elements are arranged pointing towards the centre, such as the gabled, half-timbered farmhouses, the farmsteads and the meadows and forests describing the outer extension of the villages. The homogenous architecture of the vernacular architectural ensemble illustrates a time of economic prosperity in the mid-19th century while also preserving significant earlier elements of the 17th and 18th centuries. As a result, the circular villages of the Hanoverian Wendland constitute a representative settlement structure and village typology, which to-



Fig. 1.1 Property boundaries of 19 villages in the World Heritage nomination initiative (Source: Rudolff et al. 2014)

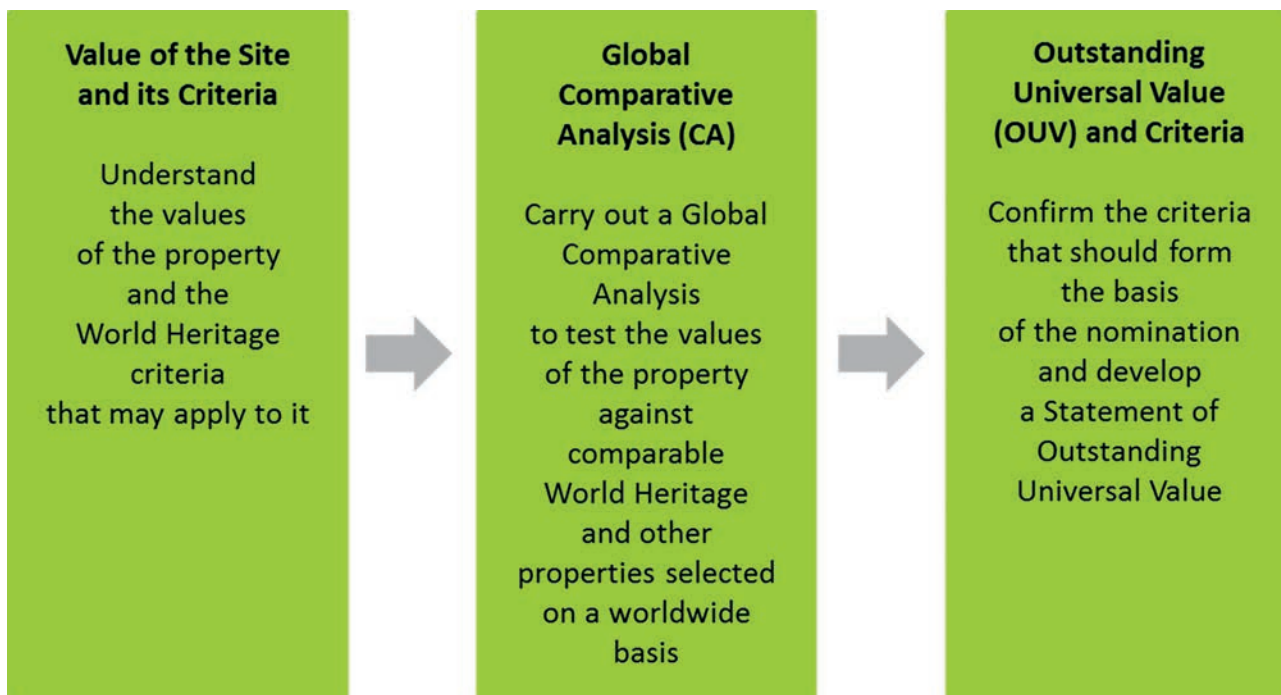


Fig. 1.2 Working Process for a World Heritage nomination (based on: UNESCO 2011. *Preparing World Heritage Nominations*, 2nd edition, p. 56)

gether convey a uniquely composed rural landscape of specific atmosphere.

The realisation of this exceptionality marked the starting point of the present World Heritage initiative “The Wendland Circular Villages (*Rundlinge*)”, driven by the joint municipality of Lüchow-Wendland. As part of this initiative, preparations for a nomination of the circular villages for the UNESCO World Heritage List have commenced on different levels. Based on value analysis and attribute definition, circular villages of the larger district were studied and compared at length and a group of 19 villages was finally identified. Within the Hanoverian Wendland, they represent a landscape exclusively composed of circular villages, with a high conservation status and an impressive density of settlements. This area, considered as the potential candidate property for World Heritage recognition, is composed of 19 villages, which are Lübeln, Gühlitz, Satemin, Jabel, Klennow, Dolgow, Güstritz, Ganse, Lensian, Schreyahn, Köhlen, Kremlin, Mammoißel, Plüggen, Busau, Granstedt, Bausen, Diahren and Priebeck. Through further studies of the historic parish boundaries, the physical landscape features, and the distribution of attributes, a potential property boundary has been defined and is illustrated in Fig. 1.1.

The rationale behind the present nomination initiative of the *Rundlinge* in the Wendland is to contribute to a more balanced representation of heritage categories, in particular when seen in a Central European context. Vernacular architecture and rural settlements have been recognised as gaps and currently underrepresented categories on the UNESCO World Heritage List, both internationally by ICOMOS in its 2004 Gap Report (ICOMOS 2004) as well as

on a national level by the Advisory Board for the revision of the German Tentative List, established by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK 2014, p. 35). The Advisory Board further recognised in its final report that “the 15 circular villages of the Wendland are distinguished by their largely preserved settlement structure” (KMK 2014, p. 35), which allows them to stand out among other settlement structures within the German context. However, the Board did not recommend immediate inclusion on the German Tentative List, as there were concerns that the authenticity of some villages has been impaired by modernisation measures and that “in addition, the medium- and long-term preservation of the villages is seen as problematic” (KMK 2014, p. 35). Moreover, they questioned the basis for the justification of Outstanding Universal Value, arguing that “there are many regions all over the world with similarly well-preserved historic villages” (KMK 2014, p. 35).

This paper has been prepared to respond to these concerns, assuring that authenticity and integrity as well as the long-term conservation of the villages can be confirmed, and to demonstrate the property’s Outstanding Universal Value. A second paper in this volume presents a preliminary comparative analysis, demonstrating the ways in which the *Rundlinge* villages stand out among other historic settlements on a global and wider regional basis. The values and attributes identified and presented below compose the basis of this comparative analysis. This paper will therefore describe the process of attribute identification and mapping applied to systematically name and locate the attributes supporting the value of the property as an outstanding village typology and settlement landscape.

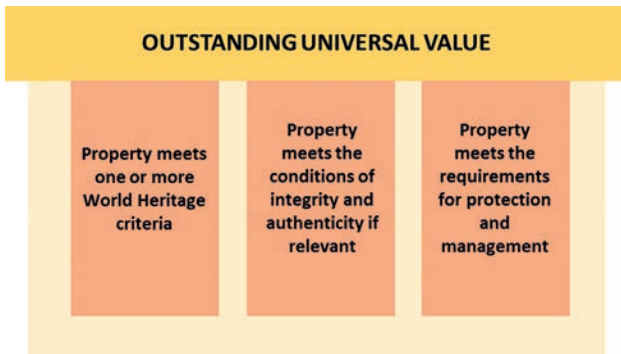


Fig. 1.3 The pillars of OUV (based on: UNESCO 2011. *Preparing World Heritage Nominations, 2nd edition, p. 58*)

2. In search of Outstanding Universal Value

World Heritage status is not easily awarded as its review and evaluation processes are complex and require a high level of scrutiny. It is hence important that World Heritage nominations are focused on those sites that illustrate the highest potential for Outstanding Universal Value. Defining and understanding the property in depth is a crucial step in the nomination process of a World Heritage site. Fig. 1.2 illustrates the working process for the identification of potential Outstanding Universal Value.

First and foremost, the value of a potential World Heritage property needs to be fully understood as this value should reflect its global exceptionality, which is the precondition for UNESCO recognition (UNESCO 2011, p. 56). The proper identification of the potential Outstanding Universal Value in terms of its value basis is also essential for the selection of the criteria (ibid). In addition, attributes illustrating these values need to be identified to allow for judgement of the property’s authenticity and integrity and to determine to what extent the existing attributes can completely and credibly convey the values identified (UNESCO 2015 par. 79–95). Subsequently, a comparative analysis, as described above, was conducted on a global level to confirm the uniqueness and exceptionality of the ways in which the identified values are demonstrated through the preserved attributes (see Fig. 1.2). While Outstanding Universal Value becomes one conglomerate statement at the end of the process, it is important to understand that the above elements need to be identified in a certain sequence to allow for relevant judgements. Within the UNESCO World Heritage context, Outstanding Universal Value is said to be composed of three pillars, which are usually presented in a specific, logical order for identification and confirmation. Although values and attributes are not named within the respective figures, they are essential components for identifying the applicability of criteria and provide benchmarks for the judgement of the qualifying conditions of integrity and authenticity as well as management and protection.

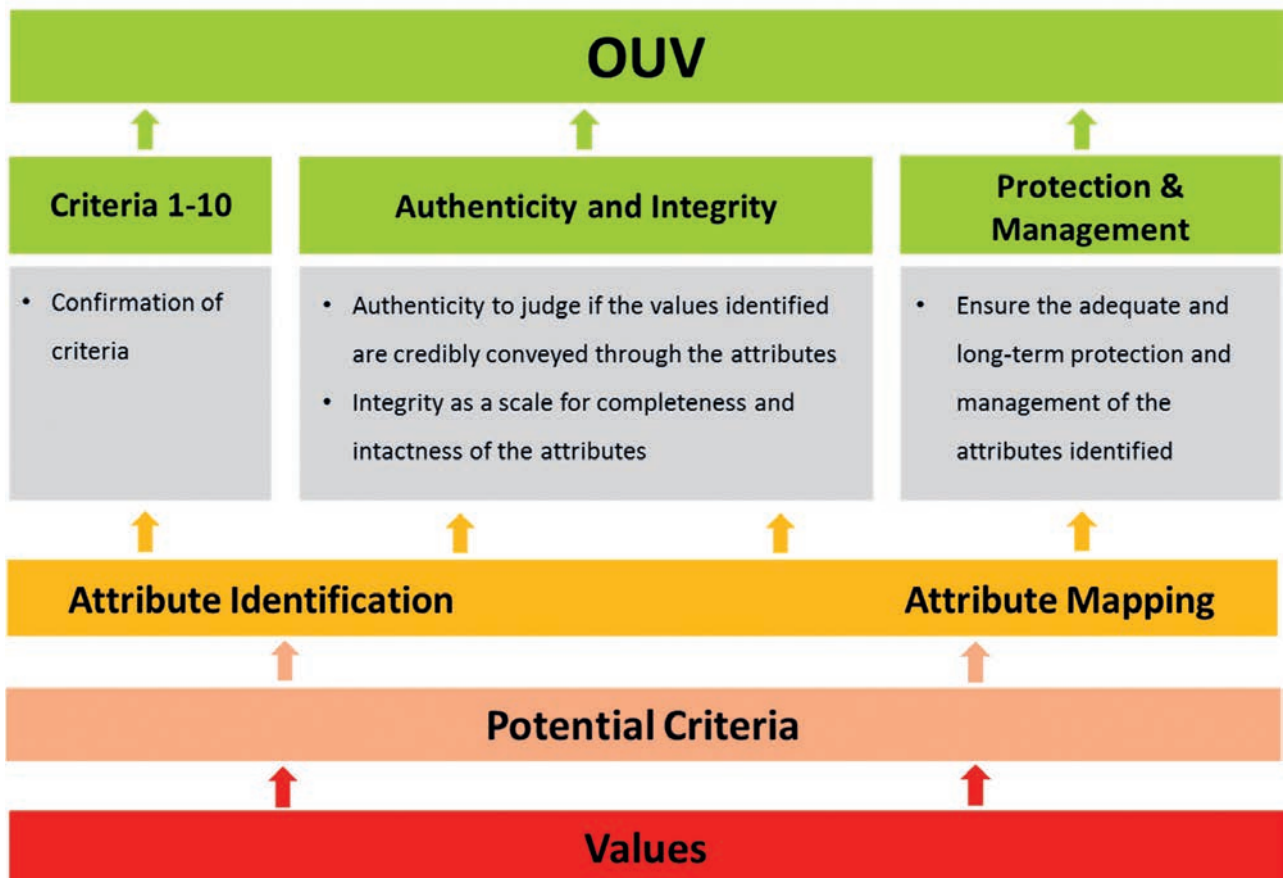


Fig. 1.4 Attribute identification and mapping process (based on: UNESCO 2011. *Preparing World Heritage Nominations, 2nd edition*)

The qualifying conditions of authenticity and integrity are illustrated in the second pillar of Fig. 1.3. While the assessment of integrity is a requirement for all properties nominated for the World Heritage List, authenticity, at present, only needs to be proven for cultural sites (UNESCO 2011, p. 61ff.). Integrity can be understood as the completeness of a property, while authenticity can be seen as its credibility and truthfulness (UNESCO 2015, paras. 80 and 88).

The last pillar of Outstanding Universal Value demands the confirmation of adequate long-term protection and management of the property. It is crucial that legal protection of the site is provided and an exhaustive management system established prior to a World Heritage candidacy (ICOMOS 2008b, p. 45). Since the values of a potential World Heritage site need to be understood in their entirety and the three aforementioned pillars act as a pertinent tool for the assessment of these values, they have become a requirement for the preparation of any World Heritage nomination. This is particularly important, as nominations are frequently rejected due to unconvincing proof of a property's Outstanding Universal Value (ICOMOS 2008b, p. 46). The methodical approach for Attribute Identification and Attribute Mapping as described below can sufficiently contribute to this process.

Fig. 1.4 describes the working model as it has been used for the identification and mapping of attributes of the *Rundlinge* in the Wendland. Based on a more general identification of values of the *Rundlinge*, their potential World Heritage criteria were considered. The values identified were then used as reference for Attribute Identification and Mapping in order to verify the property's capacity to be exceptional.

Once the key attributes are identified and listed, one must demonstrate to which degree these attributes meet the qualifying condition of authenticity (UNESCO 2015, para. 85). Likewise, integrity must be proven in order to justify the feasibility of a World Heritage nomination. Integrity can be understood as "the wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage as expressed by its preserved attributes" (UNESCO 2015, para. 88). In order to be understood as complete, all necessary attributes conveying the Outstanding Universal Value need to be included within the property boundaries (UNESCO 2015, para. 88). The documentation of all significant attributes within a potential property area can also assist in validating the criteria to be selected as well as selecting the boundaries of the property based on the presence and current condition of the attributes.

3. Values identified in the Rundlinge in the Wendland

Based on a detailed analysis of the suggested project area "The Wendland circular villages (*Rundlinge*)", the following research findings can be summarised:

The main area of distribution of the circular village typology is located in the lower Middle Elbe region due to the medieval German eastward expansion (*Ostkolonisation*). The circular village is a systematic, radially arranged, small-sized village, initially emerging from a prior horseshoe-shaped layout, consisting of farmsteads around a central village square.

The position of the circular villages had been fixed, with a long-term colonisation since the Middle Ages.

The chronological link between the systematically organised circular villages (*Rundlinge*) and the structurally planned surrounding land parcels is not quite certain.

There are no existing settlement systems in this area prior to the medieval German eastward expansion.

The development of closed circular villages (*Rundlinge*) and the preservation of Lower-German hall houses (*Niederdeutsche Hallenhäuser*) occurred during their golden age in the 19th century. This settlement structure has been preserved until today.

This section will explain these findings in more depth and draw some initial conclusions about possible criteria that could be used for the planned World Heritage site as well as for its OUV.

While the exact chronological classification of the individual elements of the circular villages in the Wendland is not clearly known via current research, it is known that their systematically arranged radial settlement form had its starting point during the general structural changes of the medieval country expansion (eastward expansion) (Meibeyer in press; Hardt in press). The circular villages, or *Rundlinge*, are characterised by a coherent development scheme and the division of the landscape corridor, adapting seamlessly to the structures within the village (Meibeyer in press; Klammt in press; Hardt in press). These divisions had been designed as a strict system of a nearly consistent distribution of ownership, in which a so-called "Hufe" was assigned to each farmstead in the circular village (Jürris 2008, p. 308).

The initial shape of these villages had previously been an open horseshoe-shape, but density increased over time, – mainly due to intensive farm and land divisions and the settlement of small-scale farmers (so-called *Kossatern*, *Brinksitzern*, or cultivators) at the village entrances and along the settlement access. This resulted in a more closed settlement, accessible only via a narrow village lane (Meibeyer in press; Jürris 2008, p.306f.). Due to the specific location of all circular villages in the landscape, as well as to the coherent building development and settlement structure, it can be assumed that a well thought-out, consistent planning scheme with recurring general characteristics was applied in this settlement landscape. This systematic development was applied most likely to induce a positive impact on the residents and their economy (Meibeyer in press; Klammt in press; Hardt in press). Nevertheless, the circular shape of the villages as a preferred settlement form was only prominent for a short period of time and was soon replaced by the construction of other village typologies, such as the ribbon-built village (Hardt 2006, p. 9; Jürris 2008, p. 309). Despite this, the villages of the Wendland have been preserved in their locality and permanently settled up to the present day. In contrast to other villages built in the course of the medieval development expansion, the Wendland was not affected by any form of development transformation, or by atypical and divergent additions afterwards, which means that the overall settlement planning concept, which was developed in the 12th century, can still be seen today. All village settlements of the planned core zone of the

Attributes of criterion (iv)
Radial arrangement of gable-ended hall houses and farm buildings
Radial arrangement of farmsteads
Horseshoe-shaped arrangement of farm woodlands
Radial arrangement of farm meadows
Hedges marking the radial border structure
Village with only one entry point
Alignment of the gables of dwelling houses and farm buildings towards the central village square
Farmyards and buildings (architectural floor plan) aligned towards the central village square

Table 1.1: Criterion (iv) and attributes

potential World Heritage site are part of this timeframe and are still largely preserved, only slightly affected by later expansions of the villages (Jüris 2008, p. 312). The circular layout of the villages, which can be seen today, reveals a striking silhouette with a particular character. Due to additional authentic aspects and attributes, the ensemble of these villages can also be understood as a potential World Heritage site.

The World Heritage nomination criteria which are most applicable to the circular villages in Wendland are criterion (iv) “an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history” (UNESCO 2011, p. 37ff.), and criterion (v) “an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment, especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change” (UNESCO 2011, p. 37ff.).

Criterion (iv) is applicable because the circular villages of the Wendland represent an outstanding example of a radially arranged settlement plan. With its consistent structure, this specific typology of a coherent and homogenous radial disposition scheme and centralised alignment represents a functional rural ensemble of a historic settlement landscape. Its pattern of circular layout is taken up by all elements, including the gabled farms, the farmsteads and auxiliary structures, and the village green of the farm meadows and forests. They all underline this typology of settlement around an open central village square and historical *cul-de-sac* disposition.

Criterion (v) is considered appropriate because of the property’s settlement density and the exclusive area occurrence of the village structure within the property. The circular villages of the Wendland are an outstanding testimony of a unique

Attributes of criterion (v)
Vernacular timber-framed architecture with a predominance of hall houses conveys a homogenous picture of the villages
High density of circular villages (<i>Rundlinge</i>) in the settlement structure
Exceptional settlement structure comprising exclusively circular villages (<i>Rundlinge</i>)
Hall houses in predominantly traditional timber-framed construction type
Smallholder farmsteads
Position of the villages (geotope border)
Farm woodlands shaped by tall trees with large canopy

Table 1.2: Criterion (v) and attributes

vernacular architectural style and exceptional settlement landscape. The coherent settlement structure with its homogenous village typology illustrates an integrated plan based on the functional and efficient adaption of the local topography and environment. The landscape’s specific vernacular housing and the architectural ensembles are representative of an exceptional settlement character with aesthetic and functional patterns relating to its peak in the 18th and 19th centuries. The historic landscape setting and traditional community use of the village elements and green spaces further illustrate an efficient interaction of man with his surrounding environment and exemplify the cultural influences of the builders.

4. Attribute identification and mapping of the Rundlinge in the Wendland

Based on the systematics described earlier, the attributes that can be found in the circular villages are illustrated in Table 1.1 and Table 1.2. They have been grouped according to the value they convey to each of the potential criteria for a World Heritage site and will be explained in detail in the following section. Table 1.1 lists all those attributes that conform with the requirements of criterion (iv) and Table 1.2 names all attributes applying to criterion (v).

Radial arrangement of gable-ended hall houses and farm buildings (Fig. 1.5)

The Low-German hall houses, specifically the orientation of the buildings and their gables, represent a visual extension of the radial arrangement of the settlement. The half-timbered houses were optimally integrated into the settlement land-



Fig. 1.5 Jabel (Lüchow), radial arrangement of gable-ended hall houses and farm buildings (photo by Kerstin Duncker)



Fig. 1.6 Köhlen, radial arrangement of farmsteads (photo by Geobasisdaten der Niedersächsischen Vermessungs- und Katasterverwaltung)



Fig. 1.7 Köhlen, horseshoe-shaped arrangement of farm woodlands (photo by Kerstin Duncker)

scape. The characteristic radial arrangement of the circular villages was further developed through the buildings' representative gable-sided fronts, thus visually framing the village square (Meibeyer in press). In addition, the houses demonstrate the positive economic conditions of the settlements (Meibeyer in press).

Radial arrangement of farmsteads (Fig. 1.6)

The most important and predominant attribute of the settlement form of the circular villages is the ideal radial distribution of the individual settlement sections of the villages. This radial arrangement can be found both in the dwelling houses and farm buildings as well as in the courtyard areas, the village forests and the village meadows and planting. The historic settlement landscape is still an authentic and well-known testimony of this continually radially planned village typology. The current structure of the circular villages goes back to the 12th century when a restructuring of the originally horseshoe-shaped village structures to a closed circle was undertaken (Hardt in press; Meibeyer in press). This consistent division of the farmsteads was outstanding at the time of its origin, and still bears witness

to the special function that the circular villages occupy in settlement history (Meibeyer in press). Although the initially-open structure changed over the centuries after its formation, the distinctive settlement pattern is still original and undeveloped and is visually supported by all existing elements (Meibeyer in press; Hardt in press; Jürriß 2008, p. 306). The radial structure can also be seen in the oldest barns of the village, while the more recent ones were built in a slightly different fashion.

Horseshoe-shaped arrangement of farm woodlands (Fig. 1.7)

The planting of the oaks in the individual parcels also underlines the idea of a coherent settlement planning. The landscape element of the green belt of trees around the villages possesses a variety of usage-related characteristics. Firstly, the hedges and greenery within the villages supplied the settlements sufficiently with fuel and construction timber as well as with fodder for the animals; they also helped to protect the settlement against wind. They additionally protected the settlements and their inhabitants against for example lightning striking the endangered wooden houses.



Fig. 1.8 Kremlin (Luckau), radial arrangement of farm meadows (photo by Kerstin Duncker)



Fig. 1.9 Kremlin (Luckau), hedges marking the radial border structure (photo by Kerstin Duncker)



Fig. 1.10 Mammoißel, alignment of the gables of dwelling houses and farm buildings towards the central village square (photo by Kerstin Duncker)



Fig. 1.11 Schreyahn, vernacular timber-framed architecture; the predominance of hall houses conveys a homogenous picture of the village (photo by Kerstin Duncker)

Radial arrangement of farm meadows (Fig. 1.8)

The adjoining fields and meadow plots of the settlement follow the schematically designed system of the circular villages and can be seen in the division of the agricultural corridors, which allowed a privileged cultivation of the area (Meibeyer 2016, p. 9ff.; Klammt 2016, p. 12ff.). The exclusively agricultural use of the areas between the villages and the undeveloped fields of the surrounding landscape are an essential core feature of the settlement landscape. The village meadows belonged to the commons until the coupling of village spaces and were only added to the individual farms in the course of this development. The radial structure of the meadows is thus a result of the coupling and together with the German hall houses illustrates a preserved condition from the 19th century.

Hedges marking the radial border structure (Fig. 1.9)

The hedges and rows of trees also visually support the radial shape of the settlement structure with its divided parcels. The radial orientation of the settlement and residential buildings continues into the landscape by this external arrangement. Fur-

thermore, these attributes also had a number of important functional features. Not only could they be used for heating systems and fire pits as well as for construction works, but because of the systematic planting of the trees for structural integrity also served as shading source for the livestock. The traditional location and usage of all green areas in the circular settlement underline the character of these elements for the village structure.

Alignment of the gables of dwelling houses and farm buildings towards the central village square (Fig. 1.10)

The village square as another typical feature of the circular villages played an exceptional role in the village settlement (Jürriis 2008, p. 306). This central square, shared by all inhabitants, was left completely undeveloped and represents the social and cultural center of the village, with every individual courtyard parcel of the village directly adjoining it. The residential and economic buildings are also circularly arranged around the village square, which is thus the core of the radial layout and which was designed to be jointly used by the inhabitants and their livestock.



Fig. 1.12 Jabel (Lüchow), hall houses of the predominantly traditional timber-framed construction type (photo by Kerstin Duncker)

Vernacular timber-framed architecture with a predominance of hall houses conveys a homogenous picture of the villages (Fig. 1.11)

The circular villages as found today with their predominately traditional farmhouse architecture of the Lower German hall house convey a homogenous picture of the historic circular villages.

High density of circular villages (Rundlinge) in the settlement structure

The 19 villages that can be found in the area which had been proposed as World Heritage core zone represent an outstanding settlement landscape because of the way in which they are distributed in the area. While this construction design of a circular village can be found almost everywhere in the area of the early eastern colonisation, nowhere else there is such coherence and density as in the Wendland (Meibeyer in press).

Exceptional settlement structure comprised exclusively of circular villages (Rundlinge)

In the proposed area, only villages of the described typology are included. The occurrence of the circular villages within this area is thus an excellent example of a planned settlement process (Hardt in press; Meibeyer in press). This applies, in particular, to the selected core zone of the potential World Heritage site whose settlement and landscape structure shows a unique and coherent overall picture (Hardt 2006, p. 90f.). Originally there were around 200 of these circular villages in the whole administrative district of the Wendland, around 100 of which can still be found in the area. While an extensive comparative analysis of the Wendland's circular villages with international settlements and village structures will allow an even more detailed evaluation, one can nevertheless conclude that this form of settlement construction can be regarded as unique in Central Europe (Meibeyer in press).

Hall houses of the predominantly traditional timber-framed construction type (Fig. 1.12)

The traditional farmhouse type of the Lower German hall house, with its specific construction of the half-timbered



Fig. 1.13 Gühlitz, hedges marking the radial border structure (photo by Kerstin Duncker)

framework, represents another well preserved attribute of the heritage site (Meibeyer in press). The setup of the multi-storey houses with their robust wooden stand construction made it possible to carry out all agricultural and everyday operations from a central location (Jürris 2008, p. 182). They represent a specific architectural language from the 17th to the 19th centuries and due to their outstanding vernacular architecture, they are part of an extraordinary settlement landscape.

Position of the villages (geotope border) (Fig. 1.13)

The coherent appearance of the circular settlement is embedded in a repetitive topographical situation of the circular villages in the landscape (Meibeyer in press; Klammt in press; Hardt in press). The villages are distributed between the geotope borders of the wet grass-lowlands, the dry sandy-loamy field geest, and the watercourses of the landscape (Klammt in press). The circular villages are oriented toward the agricultural land, while the horseshoe-shaped courtyard parcels, with their extended rear sides and grass gardens turn to the lower meadow valleys (Meibeyer in press; Jürris 2008 S.308). This optimal topographic location is the product of an economically-based planning process which strongly supported the agriculture and water supply (through in-house wells) of the settlements in order to economically optimise the earning capacity of the land. The distribution of the circular villages in the landscape is, therefore, representative of an ideal adapted rural settlement structure.

4.1 Completeness of attributes – case study Köhlen

As explained earlier in this paper, the qualifying condition of integrity is assessed through an analysis of the completeness of attributes in a potential property. For the *Rundlinge* in the Wendland, the condition of intactness and completeness was identified for each individual village as well as the settlement landscape at large. An Attribute Listing of the attributes described earlier was conducted for the village of Köhlen. Table 1.3 presents the attributes that potentially convey criteria (iv) and (v) present in the village of Köhlen. In the case of criterion (v), several attributes can only be illustrated by the settlement landscape at large and are hence not confirmed using merely the example of one single village.

	Attributes	Present	Cannot be assessed on village level
Criterion (iv)	Radial arrangement of gable-ended hall houses and farm buildings	x	
	Radial arrangement of farmsteads	x	
	Horseshoe-shaped arrangement of farm woodlands	x	
	Radial arrangement of farm meadows	x	
	Hedges marking the radial border structure	x	
	Village with only one entry point	x	
	Alignment of the gables of dwelling houses and farm buildings towards the central village square	x	
	Farmyards and buildings (architectural floor plan) aligned towards the central village square	x	
Criterion (v)	Vernacular timber-framed architecture with predominance of hall houses conveys a homogenous picture of the villages		x
	High density of circular villages (<i>Rundlinge</i>) in the settlement structure		x
	Exceptional settlement structure comprised exclusively of circular villages (<i>Rundlinge</i>)	x	
	Hall houses in predominantly traditional timber-framed construction type	x	
	Smallholder farmsteads	x	
	Position of the villages (geotope border)	x	
	Farm woodlands shaped by tall trees with large canopy	x	

Table 1.3: Criterion (v) and attributes

As can be seen from Table 1.3, Köhlen still has most of the attributes conveying the Outstanding Universal Value of the potential World Heritage site. The attributes not identified during the attribute identification and mapping process of Köhlen are those that – as illustrated above – cannot be assessed at a village level and need to be reviewed within the overall settlement landscape to reach a final conclusion.

4.2 Credibility of attributes – case study Köhlen

Following the identification and mapping of attributes as well as the demonstration of the qualifying condition of integrity, the assessment of the site demands a demonstration of authenticity. Confirming authenticity is more complex as the information sources for authenticity need to be carefully defined in relation to the individual attributes at hand. Accordingly, each attribute category needs to be analysed in terms of the information sources that credibly and truthfully convey the values through the attributes.

This shall be illustrated by using the example of the attribute of the circular footprint of the settlement arrangement in the case of the village of Köhlen. The circular footprint is characteristic of the village typology and must be legible both from within the *Rundlinge* as well as based on aerial photographs to maintain full authenticity. In the village of Köhlen, the formerly perfect circular shape was slightly altered following a fire,

which necessitated the reconstruction of the eastern part of the village. However, the circular plan remains highly legible and corresponds closely to the settlement arrangement in historic sources. The following four maps and aerial images (Figs. 1.14–1.17) illustrate the continuity of the settlement form over centuries and prove that the village typology of Köhlen remains authentic in terms of form, location, and setting.

5 Conclusion

Following the guidance provided by international standards for the identification of properties with potential Outstanding Universal Value, this paper suggests a multi-step approach towards the review of the World Heritage compatibility of the *Rundlinge* in the Wendland, a settlement landscape with circular villages. The paper illustrates that a sequential approach allows for a value identification, which can subsequently be demonstrated by means of attributes. Attributes identified and mapped within the villages have guided the definition of potential nomination criteria. This process allowed investigators to scrutinise the choice and make sound judgements on the feasibility of a World Heritage nomination.

The paper further illustrates that based on the attribute lists related to each of the potential criteria, integrity and authen-

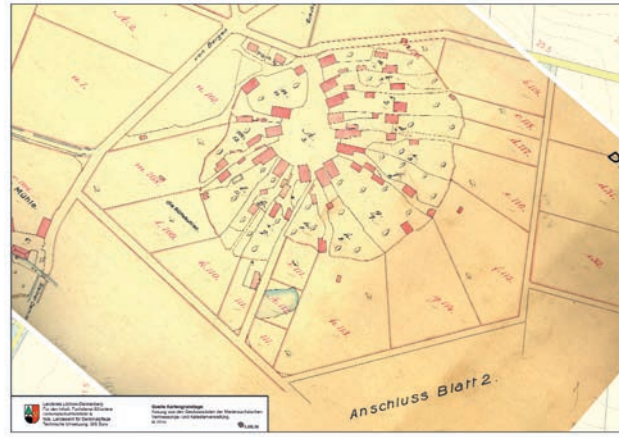


Fig. 1.14 Köhlen (based on Auszug aus den Geobasisdaten des Nds. Vermessungs- und Katasterverwaltung, Landkreis Lüchow-Dannenberg, Fachdienst 63/Untere Denkmalschutzbehörde, techn. Umsetzung: GIS-Büro)

Fig. 1.15 Verkopplungskarte Köhlen (based on Auszug aus den Geobasisdaten des Nds. Vermessungs- und Katasterverwaltung, Landkreis Lüchow-Dannenberg, Fachdienst 63/Untere Denkmalschutzbehörde, techn. Umsetzung: GIS-Büro)

Fig. 1.16 Aerial view of Köhlen (based on Auszug aus den Geobasisdaten des Nds. Vermessungs- und Katasterverwaltung, Landkreis Lüchow-Dannenberg, Fachdienst 63/Untere Denkmalschutzbehörde, techn. Umsetzung: GIS-Büro)

Fig. 1.17 Radial structure und village square in Köhlen (based on Auszug aus den Geobasisdaten des Nds. Vermessungs- und Katasterverwaltung, Landkreis Lüchow-Dannenberg, Fachdienst 63/Untere Denkmalschutzbehörde, techn. Umsetzung: GIS-Büro)

ticity of the property can be assessed both at a village level as well as for the wider landscape of 19 villages. The example of the village of Köhlen is used to highlight the completeness check for the qualifying condition of integrity and subsequent confirmation of completeness and intactness. The example selected, however, cannot conclusively confirm the integrity of all attributes identified, since a small number of attributes can be considered as being complete only if they occur in the entire settlement landscape. Likewise, the paper has given a glimpse of the assessment of authenticity based on the attribute matrix developed. For the village of Köhlen, the authenticity of village typology, a key attribute in relation to criterion (iv), has been illustrated by means of comparing historic maps and contemporary aerial photographs. The example has illustrated that Köhlen shows authenticity in relation to village typology in form, location and setting. The anticipated following step would be to apply this attribute identification and mapping to other villages and the wider

settlement landscape. This analysis will be guided by the above-described approach and will allow the confirmation of all attributes in relation to criteria (iv) and (v) as well as their qualifying conditions of integrity, authenticity, and management. Once this process has been completed, it will also be possible to identify all implications for management and protection and to finalise the formulation of the three pillars of Outstanding Universal Value.

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