

RCEWA – Caernarvon Castle by J.M.W. Turner

Applicant's statement

III Statement in relation to the Waverley criteria

The Committee's function is to consider whether an item referred to it is of national importance under any of the following criteria.

- a) Is it so closely connected with our history and national life that its departure would be a misfortune?*
- b) Is it of outstanding aesthetic importance?*
- c) Is it of outstanding significance for the study of some particular branch of art, learning or history?*

To assist the Committee, you may submit a written statement in support of your application, with particular reference to the three criteria set out above. You may use the space below (box 21) or attach a separate document for these purposes

Further information

The 'Expert Adviser's statement' and the 'Note of Case History' are available on the Arts Council Website: www.artscouncil.org.uk/reviewing-committee-case-hearings

Please note that images and appendices referenced are not reproduced.

a) Whilst connected to “our history”, there are numerous Turner paintings and drawings of Caernarvon Castle, owned by the Nation as part of the Turner Bequest and available to view or to study at Tate Britain. The Nation is already richly endowed with Turner’s creative contribution to “our history and national life” with over 30,000 works alone in the Turner Bequest, never mind the other outstanding Collections in the Royal Academy, the V & A and other leading Institutions with easy access for Scholars, Artists and the Public.

b) Whilst we would not dispute that the Work is an outstanding painting; in our view it is not of outstanding aesthetic importance in the context of the whole Oeuvre of Turner’s Works. There are many other Turner paintings of the same scale and impact in British museums.

c) Again, given the sheer scale and variety of the Turner Bequest (see above in a)), it would appear to be hard to rationalise the claim that it is of “outstanding significance” in the study of art, learning or history. In particular, there are many other major Turner historical castles in the Turner Bequest and other British Museums, including, but not limited to, other paintings of Caernarvon, Norham, Dolbadarn and Windsor.

RCEWA – Caernarvon Castle by J.M.W. Turner

Statement of the Expert Adviser to the Secretary of State that the painting meets Waverley criteria one, two and three.

Further Information

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Brief Description of Item

Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851)

Caernarvon Castle, North Wales, 1799

Watercolour over pencil, heightened with scratching out and stopping out 57 x 82.2 cm. (22.4 x 32.4 in.)

Signed lower right: *Turner*

2. Context

Provenance:

As provided and as previously documented:

John Julius Angerstein (1735–1823), acquired directly from the artist, 1799, (40 gns.); Daniel Thwaites, Junior (1817–1888), 1887; by descent to the present owners

As proposed by the author of this report:

John Julius Angerstein (1735–1823), acquired directly from the artist, 1799, (40 gns.); by descent to William Angerstein (1811–1897); purchased in 1875 by Daniel Thwaites, Junior (1817–1888); by descent to the present owners

*based on the likelihood of this work being Lot. 12, 'Castle on a River', in Christie, Manson & Woods, *Catalogue of A Collection of Pictures of Italian, Flemish, French, and English Masters* [Collection of William Angerstein], London, 30 January 1875, p.4.

Exhibited:

- London, Royal Academy, 1799, no. 340;
- London, Royal Academy, *Exhibition of the Works of the Old Masters*, 1887, no. 39;
- London, Royal Academy, *Turner Bicentenary Exhibition*, 1974-75, no. 42;
- Paris, The Grand Palais, *J.M.W. Turner at the Grand Palais*, 1983-84, no. 89;
- Zurich, Kunsthaus, *William Turner, Licht und Farbe*, 2002, no. 22 (catalogue by G.W. Koltzsch and A. Wilton);
- Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, *J.M.W. Turner*, 2007-2008, no. 8 (catalogue by I. Warrell);
- London, National Gallery, *Turner Inspired: In the Light of Claude*, 2012, no. 5
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Literature:

- A. Wilton, *The Life and Work of J.M.W. Turner*, Fribourg 1979, pp. 57-58, 60, 328, no. 254, colour pl. 47;
- A. Wilton, *Turner in Wales*, London 1984, pp. 57 & 58;
- A. Wilton, *Turner in his Time*, London 1987, pp. 40-41, 47, 48 fig. 58;
- J. Gage, *J.M.W. Turner: A Wonderful Range of Mind*, New Haven and London 1987, pp. 109-10, fig. 156;
- K.D. Kriz, *The Idea of the English Landscape Painter: Genius as Alibi in the Early Nineteenth Century*. New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1997, p.26;
- M. Kitson and I. Warrell, *Turner et Le Lorrain*, Musée des beaux-arts de Nancy, 2002 (exhibition catalogue), pp. 178-9, fig. 23;
- Eric Shanes, ed., *Turner, The Great Watercolours*, London 2001, (exhibition catalogue), pp. 35 & 36, fig. 18;
- *The Oxford Companion to J.M.W. Turner*, Oxford 2001, pp. 7 & 37;
- G Smith in D. Solkin, *Art on the Line*, New Haven and London, p.19 (ill, pl.162)
- G. Smith, *Girtin: Thomas Girtin, The Art of Watercolour*, London 2002, p. 153, fig. 34;
- G. Smith, *The Emergence of the Professional Watercolourist*, London and New York 2002, pp. 140-41, pl. X;
- A. Wilton, *Turner as Draughtsman*, Aldershot, Hampshire and Burlington, Vermont 2006, pp. 38 & 39;
- I. Warrell, ed., *Turner Inspired, In The Light of Claude*, London 2012, (exhibition catalogue), pp. 29, 33, 69 & 70, pl. 5;
- I. Warrell, *Turner's Sketchbooks*, London 2014, p. 38;
- J. Hamilton, *A Strange Business Making Art and Money in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, London 2014, pp. 14 & 15;
- Wilton, 'Composition Study: Caernarvon Castle with a Low Sun c.1798–9 by Joseph Mallord William Turner', catalogue entry, May 2013, in David Blayney Brown (ed.), *J.M.W. Turner: Sketchbooks, Drawings and Watercolours*, Tate Research Publication, April 2015, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/jmw-turner/joseph-mallord-william-turner-composition-study-caernarvon-castle-with-a-low-sun-r1174056>, accessed 5 November 2021;
- E. Shanes, *Young Mr Turner*, New Haven and London 2016, pp. 157, 159, 164, 171, fig. 209
- D. Solkin, *Art in Britain 1660-1815*, New Haven and London 2016, pp.264, 265, pl.267;
- D. Brown, 'From Turner's Studio: Studies for His Own Eyes', in N. Bell, ed., *Conversations with Turner: the watercolours*, Milan 2019, p.22

3. Waverley Criteria

Caernarvon Castle meets all three Waverley Criteria on the following grounds:

- **One:** The artwork is closely connected to British history and national life by virtue of its subject, its maker and its early provenance. It is a depiction of a building of national significance - Caernarvon Castle in north Wales - by the most famous and internationally-renowned British landscape artist Joseph Mallord William Turner. Its first owner was John Julius Angerstein, a key figure in the cultural life of Britain – upon his death in 1823 his collection of Old Masters became the foundation for the National Gallery.

- **Two:** The work has outstanding aesthetic importance as a pivotal example of both Turner's intellectual investment in and technical mastery of the watercolour medium and his adoption of French painter Claude Lorrain as a prime influence. With its glowing light effect and harmonious tonal gradations, this exceptionally powerful watercolour was Turner's first public expression of what would become a lifelong quest to emulate and surpass the luminous effects of sunlight he so admired in Claude's work.
- **Three:** The watercolour is of outstanding significance for the study of two tenets of British art: the evolution of landscape art (and within this the dual phases of fascination with Welsh subject matter and Old Master practice) and the making and collecting of exhibition watercolours. This watercolour was transformative to both spheres – through it both landscape art and watercolour practice were elevated enough to become focal points for national pride. Internationally these practices remain noted as particularly British achievements. As such it is of vital importance to the telling of a uniquely British history of art.

DETAILED CASE

1. Detailed description of item if more than in Executive summary, and any comments.

At 57 x 82.2cm *Caernarvon Castle* exceeds in size any watercolour that Turner had made to this point (only *Kirkstall Abbey, Yorkshire, 1797*, Fitzwilliam Museum comes close at 514 x 749). Its asymmetric composition, which places the sun centrally, was inspired by seventeenth-century painter Claude Lorrain while its subject matter finds a prestigious precedent in work by Welsh landscapist Richard Wilson (for example *A Summer Evening (Caernarfon Castle)*, c.1775, Yale Center for British Art).

The watercolour's contrast between light and dark is eye-catching – an innovative device that would attract attention from the crowded walls of the Royal Academy. Turner dramatizes the topography, too, foreshortening the depth of field. This allows for a pared-back composition that focuses our eye on the contrast between dark castle and glowing sun. Boatmen, a washerwoman and gulls provide scale for the looming castle and a sense of gentle movement.

The white of the paper is used to great effect, with a thin, graded wash of yellow suffusing the sheet with a tangible sense of warm light. This work marks an important breakthrough in Turner's development as a watercolourist, evidencing the way in which he refined his 'scale practice' technique (involving the application of blocks of colour to give a textured, blended effect when viewed from further away), pursuing richer gradations and evermore harmonious blends of colour.

A particular area of brilliance is the rendering of the Menai Strait. Its glassy surface is cut through by ripples created by the application of stopping out fluid and scratching out. The watercolour's lack of visible outlines, along with its depth of colour and dramatic visual impact are the principle technical qualities by which this work comes close to oil painting, a feat remarked upon in contemporary accounts of it and which few practitioners were acknowledged to have achieved.

Turner would have known the thirteenth-century castle through prints and paintings by other artists, chiefly Richard Wilson, before encountering the site for himself on his seven-week tour of Wales in

1798. Several sketchbooks in the Turner Bequest at Tate Britain record this encounter, amongst them the *Hereford Court Sketchbook* (Tate, Turner Bequest XXXVIII), which contains two swiftly-made sketches that relate to this watercolour (D01347–8). A further six compositional and colour studies are in the *Academical Sketchbook* (Tate, Turner Bequest XLIII). The existence of a small oil painting on panel (Tate, N01867) further distinguishes the present watercolour in Turner's *oeuvre*. Turner rarely made sketches in oils for his watercolours; to have done so in this case endows the work with strategic importance as a statement of this ambitious twenty-four year-old's belief in watercolour as a vehicle for serious artistic expression, as much as a means to display his innovative supremacy in the medium.

2. Detailed explanation of the outstanding significance of the item

Significance of subject matter, maker, and ownership history

The watercolour depicts Caernarvon Castle, built by Edward I from 1283 as part of a scheme to establish English rule in Wales. Occupying a site on the Menai Strait fortified since Roman times, the castle is now designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It has played a prominent role in British public life, notably as the site of the investiture of Charles, Prince of Wales, in 1969.

This particular depiction of it has especial importance for being made by JMW Turner, Britain's most influential and internationally-renowned landscape artist. His exhibited depictions of this subject – of which this watercolour is the first and most important – cemented the site's identity as a readily-identifiable icon of the British landscape, and, specifically, intensified the cultural gaze on Wales as a place of potential for the expression of Romantic sentiment in both visual art and literature.

Its first owner, John Julius Angerstein (1735–1823), was a key figure in the cultural life of Britain. Having made his fortune in insurance, chiefly at Lloyd's, he spent it acquiring art and supporting young British talents like Turner and Thomas Lawrence. Following his death thirty-eight of his Old Master paintings were purchased by the British government, becoming the foundational collection of the National Gallery.

Aesthetic merit and outstanding significance in the history of British art

Multiple primary narratives in the history of British art and the cultural history of the nation converge in *Caernarvon Castle, North Wales*. Attested to by its presence in numerous surveys of British art, most recently David Solkin's *Art in Britain, 1600 – 1815*, this visually outstanding work is a keystone upon which major developments in landscape art, watercolour practice and the career of Britain's most renowned painter rest.

It was, as Andrew Wilton has described, a

'manifesto: a large-scale watercolour...that vies with oil painting in strength and emulates in composition and mood one of Claude's famous seaports, which [he] had seen in the collection of John Julius Angerstein'

(*Oxford Companion to JMW Turner*, p.37)

Indeed, *Caernarvon Castle* was the very first work through which Turner revealed to the public what would become a lifelong fascination with Claude. His career-defining desire to emulate and excel the painter he most admired culminated in a stipulation in his Will that two of his most Claudean paintings (*Dido Building Carthage* and *Sun Rising through Vapour*) be permanently hung alongside two of Angerstein's Claudes in the National Gallery. One of these is the work that directly inspired *Caernarvon Castle*. The pairing of Turner and Claude remains a highlight of the National Gallery's displays today.

Turner's viewing of Angerstein's collection in the winter of 1798 was remarked upon as a transformational experience by his friend George Jones:

'while the young painter was looking at the Sea Port by Claude [*Seaport with the Embarkation of St Ursula* (National Gallery)]...Turner was awkward, agitated, and burst into tears. Mr Angerstein enquired the cause and pressed for an answer, when Turner said passionately, "Because I shall never be able to paint any thing like that picture."
(*Recollections of JMW Turner* in Gage, *Correspondence*, p.4)

Produced in the months following this visit, Turner channelled his despair into *Caernarvon Castle*, translating it into a statement of intent to be recognised as a worthy inheritor to Claude's genius.

Turner's watercolour simplifies the composition of Claude's *Seaport*, using the towering Welsh castle to mirror the grandeur of Claude's classical buildings. Crucial to the visual impact of both paintings is the central placement of the sun; this was a move no other British artist before Turner had been bold enough to make (Warrell, *Turner Inspired*, p.33). *Caernarvon Castle* is thus the first of Turner's many essays in the sun's captivating power, a quality his work remains so much prized for today.

This watercolour is of prime importance, too, as the first in which Turner experiments with visual devices that he returned to throughout his career – a pared-back composition, with landform or building silhouetted by a sun whose radiance is multiplied by its watery reflection. As such it is the building block for some of his most famous and best-loved works, including *Decline of the Carthaginian Empire* (1817, Tate), *Regulus* (1828, Tate), and *Norham Castle, Sunrise* (c.1845, Tate).

Hanging cheek-by-jowl with other watercolours on the walls of the Royal Academy's Council Room, *Caernarvon Castle* certainly stood out – not only for its striking composition and dramatic light-dark contrast, but also for its explicit reference to Claude, whose works were highly prized by collectors. Turner's ambition was rewarded and the work garnered him accolades as the 'modern Claude', or 'British Claude'; one reviewer noted that *Caernarvon Castle* was a work 'that CLAUDE might have been proud to own' (John Taylor for the *True Briton*, 10 May 1799).

Since Turner's viewing of Angerstein's Claudes in 1798 led directly to the production of *Caernarvon Castle*, it is fitting, then, that Angerstein purchased it. That he paid 40 guineas, a sum far higher than Turner was asking (Farington, *Diary*, 27 May 1799) is a further mark of its outstanding quality and its contemporary appeal.

Caernarvon Castle is also important for its indebtedness to the Welsh painter Richard Wilson (1713–1782), and for the role it played in promoting the Welsh landscape in the cultural imagination of the nation. Turner undertook four tours to Wales in the 1790s, pursuing multiple types of imagery that corresponded with popular tourist sights: its sublime mountains, modern industry, picturesque ruins and curious antiquarian features. Turner's artistic investment in Wales and the success he had obtained through depiction of Welsh castles in particular is indicated by his selection of his oil painting *Dolbadern Castle* (1800) to represent him for posterity in the Royal Academy's collection upon his election as a Member in 1802.

Caernarvon Castle had gained traction through the 1700s as a celebrated landscape icon thanks to attention from influential landscape artists like Paul Sandby, Turner's supporter Joseph Farington and, most prominently, Wilson, who had been the first to place a Claudian filter on the Welsh landscape. Wilson was the principle motivation behind Turner's engagement with Wales and with Caernarvon Castle. In the years immediately prior to Turner's painting of *Caernarvon Castle*, he had been studying Wilson's work (see, for example, the *Wilson Sketchbook*, 1796-7, Tate) and had been commissioned by Sir Richard Colt Hoare to paint a pendant for a Wilson in his collection (*Aenae and the Sibyl*, 1798, Tate). It is possible that the present watercolour may have been designed by Turner as a speculative attempt to appeal to Angerstein's taste and to have a work of his enter such a prestigious collection in a similar way.

Turner's attention to Caernarvon encouraged younger contemporaries and generations of artists after him to depict the site, including John Sell Cotman, David Cox, William James Muller, and, in the twentieth century, John Piper. By comparison to the work of his forebears (and those who followed in his wake), however, Turner's *Caernarvon Castle* is distinguished by its bold composition and power. Placing the viewer close to the castle amplifies the structure's looming form. Its foreboding presence is offset by the glowing calm of the scene and the humdrum activity of the figures. This renders *Caernarvon Castle*, as Andrew Wilton has described, the epitome of a uniquely British form of landscape practice in the 1790s, the 'Picturesque Sublime' (Wilton, *Life and Work*, p. 54).

Caernarvon Castle was not only Turner's first but his most visually distinctive depiction of this site. Other versions, such as the watercolour he exhibited in 1800 which took his Claudian exploration of Caernarvon Castle in a more pastoral direction (Tate) and his watercolour for *Picturesque Views of England and Wales* of c.1834 ([British Museum](#) 1958,0712.439), are either smaller in size or lack the compositional force and power of the present work. It compares favourably, too, to other of Turner's major Welsh subjects from this time (see, for example, *Trancept of Ewenny Priory, Glamorganshire, 1800*, National Museum of Wales). None bear *Caernarvon Castle's* richness of colour, radiance, technical brilliance and status as a seminal expression of artistic intent.

Indeed, *Caernarvon Castle* marks a vital turning point in Turner's intellectual approach to landscape painting. As noted by David Solkin, it displayed a new restraint in its attention to architectural detail (Solkin, *Art in Britain*, p.265). Here the eye rests on only a few choice details; the scene's imaginative and atmospheric potential is thus privileged. In this it can be aligned to a new discourse of landscape art, *Essays on the Nature and Principle of Taste* (1790). Its author, Scottish writer Archibald Alison, believed landscape paintings should 'not only speak to the eye, but the affect the imagination and the heart'. The present watercolour, and indeed the rest of Turner's career, can be said to have fulfilled this objective. *Caernarvon Castle* therefore represents a turning point in the discipline of

landscape art in Britain, the point at which Turner demonstrated to his peers that landscape – and watercolour, too – could do much more than was assumed. The watercolour was indeed recognised as raising the bar, attracting praise for its ability to ‘make its way immediately to the imagination of the spectator’ (John Taylor for the *True Briton*, 10 May 1799).

Turner underlined this intellectual appeal by appending an excerpt of poetry to the picture:

*Now rose
Sweet Evening, solemn hour, the sun declin'd
Hung golden o'er this nether firmament,
Whose broad cerulean mirror, calmly bright,
Gave back his beamy visage to the sky
With splendour undiminish'd*

(from *Amyntor and Theodora* by David Mallett, 1747)

As well as drawing attention to the technical bravura of his luminous sunset, these lines underscore Turner's intent that *Caernarvon Castle* be a contemplative portal. His choice of subject was highly pertinent for the time – the castle was a site of struggle, a symbol of Edward I's monarchical might and oppression of the Welsh people. While Turner would go on to explore this episode of British history more explicitly in his pastoral watercolour of Caernarvon (1800, Tate), the present watercolour bears a solemn profundity that calls attention to the castle as a fortress, and a sign of warfare. This spoke powerfully to the present, playing into sensitivities around invasion and loss of liberty for a now-unified country dogged by the threat of invasion by Napoleon. This was Turner's most powerful attempt to use landscape to connect past and present to date, an intellection ambition he pursued throughout his life – this quality alone renders it a work of outstanding importance in the development of British art, particularly the elevation of landscape painting into a academic genre worthy of national pride.

There is one further layer of exceptional significance in *Caernarvon Castle*: its medium. As David Blayney Brown has recently written, the fact that Turner executed this subject – and emulated the manner of French painter Claude – in watercolour, the most English of mediums, makes it ‘an assertion of liberty itself’ (*Conversations with Turner*, p.22). As such it played to patriotic fervour, simultaneously showing Turner's peers that this native but much derided medium was as capable of profundity and drama as oil. Large in size, boldly composed, intensely luminous, and powerfully coloured, it was a calculated advertisement of Turner's technical mastery, exhibiting a wide range of techniques, from stopping out and scratching out to an exquisitely refined gradation of colour. Particularly important is its lack of visible outlines – a technical and aesthetic development adapted from oil painting and spearheaded by Turner that helped watercolour shed its lowly associations with amateur and commercial graphic practices. Along with *View near Beddgelert* (National Museum of Wales), by his close friend Thomas Girtin, *Caernarvon Castle* made 1799 a transformative year in British watercolour history. These large-scale works marked out their young artists as ‘pioneers of a prestigious new art’ (Smith, *Emergence*, p.140).

Outshining all the other works he had on display in 1799, including oils, *Caernarvon Castle* was a critical sensation. The *Lloyd's Evening Post* (10-13 May) praised this ‘most exquisite Drawing’, claiming that it should ‘be classed with the very best that the Art has produced’. Another marvelled

at its possession of a 'depth and tone, which I never before conceived attainable with such untoward implements'. As Eric Shanes has written, *Caernarvon Castle* 'most epitomised Turner's transforming powers'; it was the work which launched his reputation as a 'magician' who was able to create masterpieces from a humble medium (*Great Watercolours*, p.35).

Angerstein's offer of 40 guineas was also transformational, validating the work's ambition and allowing Turner to place higher premiums on his watercolours henceforth. No doubt the success of *Caernarvon Castle* played a role in Turner's successful bid to become an Associate member of the Royal Academy in November that year – his first step on the ladder of professional recognition.

Further points of distinction

The watercolour passed into the collection of John Julius Angerstein's grandson, William Angerstein (1811–1897), who, like his father, served as a Member of Parliament. As proposed for the first time here, *Caernarvon Castle* was very likely the 'Castle on a River' offered as Lot 12 in the Christie, Manson & Woods sale of William Angerstein's collection, 30 January 1875. It was purchased by Daniel Thwaites Jr (1817–1888), a brewer and Member of Parliament for Blackburn. This reveals another aspect in which this watercolour is significant to national life – as a prized symbol of wealth attained through new commercial industries in the nineteenth century, and the growth in prosperity of northern industrialists in particular. Thwaites held other important Turner watercolours, including *Norham Castle: Sunrise* (sold, Christie's London, 5 July 2017, lot 105), and *Virginia Water* (sold, Sotheby's London, 8 July 2010, lot 48).

Caernarvon Castle stands distinct in relation to these and all other comparative works mentioned here for its outstanding, multi-faceted significance, a significance attested to by the many references to it in literature on Turner and the history of British art more generally.

Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest, note of case hearing on 9 December 2021: Caernarvon Castle by J.M.W. Turner (Case 6, 2021-22)

Application

1. The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest (RCEWA) met on 9 December 2021 to consider an application to export *Caernarvon Castle* by J.M.W. Turner. The value shown on the export licence application was £800,000. The applicant stated that the current market value was £850,000 which was supported by an insurance valuation. The expert adviser had objected to the export of the painting under the first, second and third Waverley criteria on the grounds that its departure from the UK would be a misfortune because (i) it was so closely connected with our history and national life (ii) it was of outstanding aesthetic importance and (iii) it was of outstanding significance for the study of British history of art.

2. Six of the regular eight RCEWA members were present and were joined by three independent assessors, acting as temporary members of the Reviewing Committee. The Chairman explained that the binding offers mechanism was applicable for this case.

3. The applicant was consulted about the digital process and confirmed they were content to proceed in this manner. The applicant confirmed that the value did not include VAT and that VAT would not be payable in the event of a UK sale. The applicant also confirmed that the owner understood the circumstances under which an export licence might be refused.

Expert's submission

4. The expert adviser had provided a written submission stating the artwork was closely connected to British history and national life by virtue of its subject, its maker and its early provenance. The painting depicts a building of national significance, Caernarvon Castle in north Wales, by the most famous and internationally renowned British landscape artist Joseph Mallord William Turner. Its first owner was John Julius Angerstein, who was a key figure in the cultural life of Britain, and whose collection of Old Masters became the foundation for the National Gallery upon his death in 1823.

5. The expert further stated that the work was of outstanding aesthetic importance as a pivotal example of both Turner's intellectual investment in and technical mastery of the watercolour medium and his adoption of French painter Claude Lorrain as a prime influence. With its glowing light effect and harmonious tonal gradations, this exceptionally powerful watercolour was Turner's first public expression of what would become a lifelong quest to

emulate and surpass the luminous effects of sunlight he so admired in Claude's work.

6. The watercolour was of outstanding significance for the study of two tenets of British art: the evolution of landscape art (and within this the dual phases of fascination with Welsh subject matter and Old Master practice) and the making and collecting of exhibition watercolours. This watercolour was transformative to both spheres, and both landscape art and watercolour practice were elevated enough to become focal points for national pride. Internationally these practices remain noted as particularly British achievements.

Applicant's submission

7. The applicant had stated in a written submission that whilst connected to UK history, there were numerous Turner paintings and drawings of Caernarvon Castle available to view or study at Tate Britain, as well as numerous Turner works in other outstanding collections including the Royal Academy, the V & A and other leading Institutions.

8. The applicant was of the view that this work was not of outstanding aesthetic importance in the context of the whole Oeuvre of Turner's Works and that there were many other Turner paintings of the same scale and impact in British museums.

9. There were other major Turner historical castles in British Museums, including, but not limited to, other paintings of Caernarvon, Norham, Dolbadarn and Windsor which limits the relevance of this painting to the study of art, learning or history.

Discussion by the Committee

10. The expert adviser and applicant retired and the Committee discussed the case. They agreed that this was a beautiful and intriguing watercolour, with a significant provenance. However, although it was produced at a key moment in Turner's life, they were not certain that it was pivotal within Turner's career, as he produced several watercolours of this subject.

11. The Committee then discussed the condition of the watercolour, noting the new technique Turner introduced here, where thin washes of colour were used, relying on the exposed paper to create luminosity. They agreed that this was interesting, however, they observed that the condition was compromised as the paper had darkened, weakening the original luminosity. Furthermore, the Committee noted there were other works featuring the subject of Caernarvon Castle in UK public collections.

12. The Committee considered the interesting provenance and the opportunities this work presented to contrast other artists of the time with Turner's Old Master approach. However, as it had been widely displayed and studied, they did not

agree there was substantially more that could be learned from this watercolour. The Committee concluded that, while it was an interesting picture, it was not of outstanding significance, and did not meet any of the three Waverley criteria.

Waverley Criteria

13. The Committee voted on whether the painting met the Waverley criteria. Of the 9 members, no members voted that it met the first Waverley criterion. No members voted that it met the second Waverley criterion. One voted that it met the third Waverley criterion. The painting was therefore not found to meet any of the Waverley criteria.

Communication of findings

14. The expert adviser and the applicant returned. The Chairman notified them of the Committee's decision on its recommendation to the Secretary of State. The Chairman noted that although the painting did not meet the Waverley criteria, the expert adviser had provided an excellent submission and was correct in their decision to bring the painting to the Committee.