

Heritage Crime Risk Assessment





Summary

This guidance note is aimed at heritage professionals, community groups and volunteers who have little or no experience of risk management and crime prevention. Its aim is to introduce a straightforward methodology that will help them to assess and quantify relative crime risks and to implement cost-effective measures to address those risks. This process is distinct from any assessment of risk undertaken for insurance purposes.

For more advice on heritage crime and preventative measures, see Historic England 2023 [Heritage Crime Prevention](#).

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Front cover:

Although not immediately apparent, the lead has been stolen from the roof of this church.

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1

Introduction

Heritage crime: Any offence involving damage or loss to the historic environment, including all offences involving cultural property.

National Heritage and Cultural Property Crime Working Group

Why assess crime risks to heritage assets?

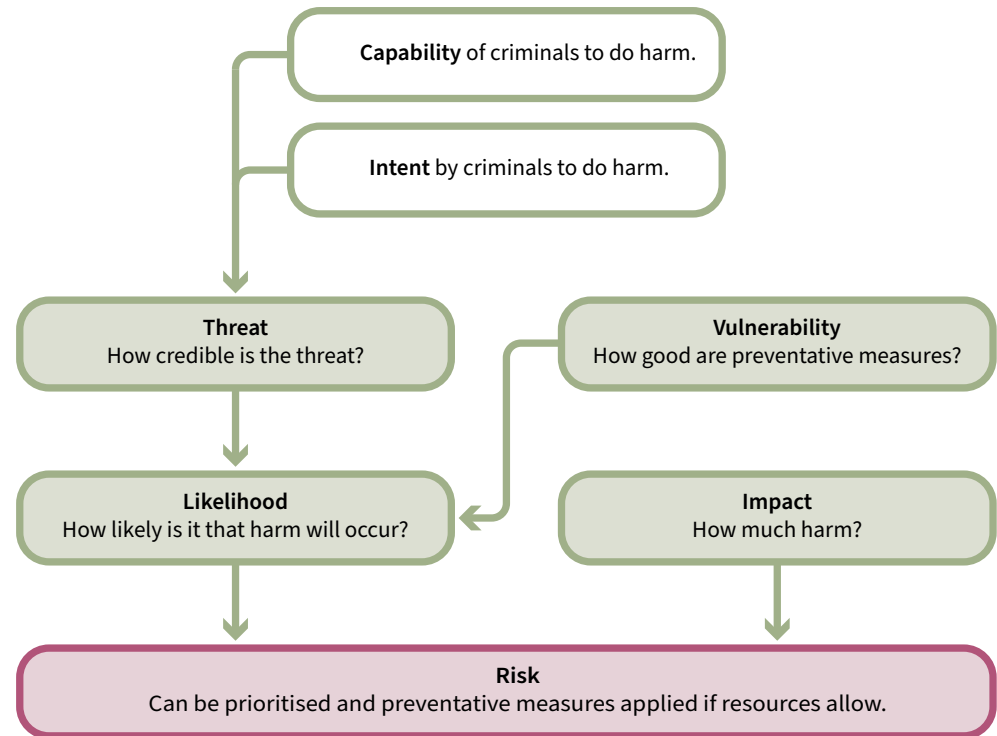
The basic objective of crime risk assessment is to reduce future harm. Risks are harms that might happen to [heritage assets](#) in the future. Previously recorded crimes or incidents are harms that have already happened and, if the causes are not addressed, may indicate a risk that future harm will occur.

Good practice for crime risk assessment involves regularly employing a simple review methodology to ensure that heritage crime risks are discovered and reduced, and have cost-effective preventative measures applied to them. Working in partnership with the police, community groups and heritage organisations can ensure that assessments are based on up-to-date, credible information and a realistic calibration of the risk of crime occurring. Heritage crime statistics, ideally for the past three to five years, will show the types and scale of crime against heritage assets locally and enable recent trends to be identified. Using heritage crime data, including details of incidents not reported previously to the police, not only helps to ensure that preventative measures are directed against the sorts of crimes that are common locally but also helps to react to current trends.

Understanding risk

It is important to use terminology such as ‘threat’ and ‘risk’ in a consistent manner and to understand the difference between them. The factors that build together to create risk are set out below.

Figure 1:
Diagram showing risk
assessment model.



Threat: Factors that can cause harm: in this case, criminal activity.

Vulnerability: Weaknesses in protective measures (for example, lack of physical security, Heritage Watch scheme, and so on) that expose heritage assets to threats.

Likelihood: Taken together, a credible threat and an existing vulnerability to that threat create a likelihood that harm will occur. Judging the likelihood that harm will occur is not a precise exercise, but it is an important part of managing risk in a cost-effective way. In the case of acquisitive crime (theft), the value or perceived value of an asset may have a bearing on this judgement.

Impact: This is a measure of the amount of harm that will be done if the threat succeeds in its objective. Not all harm is equal; some levels of harm can be tolerated and, in financial terms, may cost less to make good than preventing them. This involves a judgement about how important it is to prevent harm.

Risk: Risk of harm is the culmination of an assessment of all the above factors. It is a subjective but evidence-based judgement about how likely it is that harm will occur, and how severe the impact is likely to be.

Often, risk assessment is only considered after a crime or attempted crime has occurred. The primary concern for owners or custodians is usually whether the incident is likely to happen again in the future. If the incident occurred because a threat exploited a vulnerability, then there is a risk of future harm. This, however, can be mitigated by applying preventative measures.

Managing risk

It is important to be concerned about all forms of risk, including those that are not immediately evident. Regular risk and security reviews, such as the appraisal of heritage assets that are significant or financially valuable, are an important element in managing risk. So, too, is remaining alert to heritage crime trends, by keeping in contact with the police, Heritage Watch schemes and heritage organisations.

Understanding the factors that together create risk enables that risk to be managed by reducing or removing any threat or vulnerability. Reducing threat can be the most challenging aspect and is largely a role for the police and law enforcement agencies. Reducing vulnerability is very much within the power of owners and custodians. Implementing measures such as improved physical security or training for staff and volunteers can be very effective and need not necessarily involve significant financial commitment. Vulnerabilities are constantly evolving, though, and criminals are adept at identifying new opportunities. Effective risk management requires a regular process of monitoring, review and learning from experience.

Where crime occurs, preventative measures may reduce the impact or severity of harm. For example, installing an audible alarm to protect a heritage lead roof on a listed building (which may require consent) will reduce harm, as offenders are likely to flee on hearing the alarm. An alarm may also affect the likelihood of crime happening at all, if the alarm system is easily visible and highlighted by a warning sign. In exceptional circumstances, where a building has been subjected to heritage metal theft, replacing a lead roof, or part of it, with an alternative metal roofing material, may be another acceptable way to reduce risk. See Historic England guidance on [Theft of metal from Church Roofs: Replacement materials](#). Regular checks to confirm that significant or valuable assets are safe can help ensure that risks or incidents are spotted early and that effective intervention is made to limit and prevent future harm.

Prioritising risk

The Heritage Crime Risk Assessment Framework (see below) enables crime threats to a heritage asset to be recorded and calibrated, in terms of their impact and likelihood, to give a risk score. This is not a scientific exercise because it generally relies on incomplete information and human judgement. Nonetheless, it enables the main risks to be identified and ranked, so that those of greatest priority can be addressed first. By undertaking regular reviews, it is possible to track, over time, whether the overall level of risk to a heritage asset is reducing, and whether the action plan to prevent future harm is succeeding.

Action plan

This is the key outcome from the risk assessment process. Within the action plan, it is important to consider cost-effectiveness, as not all crime prevention measures need to be expensive. Appropriate general heritage crime prevention tactics can be identified by referring to Historic England 2023 [Heritage Crime Prevention](#). More specific crime prevention advice can be sought from police specialists or external consultants, although it is advisable to ensure that any advice from the latter is independent and not tied to a specific product. It is also important to be aware that not all police and external crime prevention advisers will have experience or training in dealing with historic assets. Consequently, some advice that would be helpful for modern buildings may not be appropriate for historic areas or sites. In particular, consent may be required before certain work can be undertaken. The insurer should also be contacted, as they may have specific requirements or restrictions, on contractor accreditation, for example.

Measures for the action plan may include ‘situational’ crime prevention (for example, fitting locks or alarms) and also ‘social’ crime prevention (for example, setting up a Heritage Watch scheme). Local neighbourhood police officers, police crime prevention officers (also known as designing out crime officers or similar) or independent security advisers with equivalent accreditation can offer further advice on such measures. Accredited crime prevention training for police and others is provided by [Police Crime Prevention Initiatives](#).

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Completing the Risk Assessment Framework

This information is intended for heritage professionals, community groups, property owners/custodians and volunteers who have limited knowledge of risk assessment and crime prevention. Ideally, the framework should be used following a short training input, during which the methodology can be explained. Where this is not possible, this guidance note is intended to support those undertaking the assessment process.

Regular assessment of heritage crime risks, and implementation of effective mitigation measures as a consequence, should be considered good practice and an integral part of the conservation regime relating to any heritage asset. [Designated heritage assets](#) on the [Heritage at Risk Register](#) maintained by Historic England may be particularly at risk of harm if subject to criminal activity, as the asset may already be fragile. Such assets may [attract crime](#) if they are not maintained or if they appear neglected. This risk assessment process is distinct from that relating to other risks, such as fire and flood, or from any requirements of an insurance company. However, in some cases (for example, [arson](#)), there are overlaps and potential opportunities to align response plans.

What types of heritage asset is the assessment suitable for?

There is a wide range of heritage assets, and, inevitably, a framework such as this may not be suitable for all situations. In some cases, where the heritage context is particularly extensive, complex or of great significance or financial value, more specialist advice or expertise may be required. Complex sites comprising different buildings with variable designations (for example, scheduling, listing, ecclesiastical exemption, and so on) may require separate assessments for each, to ensure that any crime prevention action taken is proportionate to the assessed risk.

This assessment is not suitable if there is a significant risk of serious organised crime or terrorism. In such cases, early consultation with the local police force will enable a specialist risk assessment to be undertaken, involving a counter-terrorism security adviser if necessary.

The Heritage Crime Risk Assessment Framework is accompanied by specialist Quick Reference Summaries to assist those completing the process in relation to the following heritage asset types:

- heritage buildings
- historic landscapes
- maritime heritage assets

The relevant Quick Reference Summary should be used alongside the Heritage Crime Risk Assessment Framework as a prompt to help with assessing the various threats that exist. Each one briefly outlines crime prevention measures that could be employed to mitigate those threats.

For more crime prevention guidance and further sources of information, refer to Historic England 2023 [Heritage Crime Prevention](#). Specialist [advice about preventing crime against museums and galleries](#) can be sourced from the Arts Council.

How reliable is the risk score?

The Heritage Crime Risk Assessment Framework produces a numerical score (1–25). The accuracy of the score depends on the imperfect information available and also human judgement. Scores are intended to help assess the risks of crime to a heritage asset. They help to compare the different crime risks that may affect it. They can also be used to compare the risk of a particular crime threat against a number of assets (for example, the threat of heritage metal theft against churches in a particular area). Assessments should be reasonably reliable if they are completed objectively by people who follow this guidance or who have been trained in the methodology. Ideally, if a group of heritage assets is being assessed, the same people should undertake all the assessments to maximise consistency.

How should I go about assessing the crime risk against the heritage asset I am concerned about?

Broadly, this process aligns with the problem-solving, or [problem-oriented policing](#) approach widely used as a crime reduction model by UK and international police forces. Generally, this is referred to as the OSARA or SARA model, based on the initial letter of each of the phases. Having identified the measurable crime reduction ‘objective’, the risk assessment encompasses the ‘scanning’ and ‘analysis’ phases of the process. In turn, during the ‘response’ phase, suitable measures are applied to prevent or reduce the problem. ‘Assessment’ refers to the process of review, measuring how effective the response has been.

- **Objective:** the aim to be achieved and how and when success will be measured
- **Scanning:** identification of the potential crime and anti-social behaviour problems
- **Analysis:** review of information/intelligence to identify causes of the problems
- **Response:** the application of specific measures to address problem causes
- **Assessment:** measurement of effectiveness of response and, if necessary, adaption

During the analysis phase and when determining the response, consideration should be given to three elements of every crime – victim, offender and location – as distinct aspects that need to be understood and assessed for potential intervention in order to reduce crime.

A good place to start is to **review any previous crime risk assessment** that has already been conducted and to take into account any crime prevention measures that are already in place or any crime prevention advice provided by an accredited professional. However, many assets will not have been assessed or, if they have, it may not be possible to obtain a copy of the assessment.

Before starting a new assessment, an **information-gathering phase is vital**. A plan of the site (even if it is not to scale) may be useful to locate particular assets or features, and this can be added to the assessment framework. Good quality photographs of key assets, clearly showing a scale and any identification marks, damage or other identifiable features, should be added to the file, as should any video footage. In some situations, drone or aerial images may be helpful.

Identification of any designation of the heritage asset being assessed is an important element because it determines what, if any, statutory protection is in place. It also helps to pinpoint which characteristics are especially important to conserve and protect. For example, the listing narrative for a building will generally identify any parts of the fabric that are of particular historic interest. The current [list of nationally designated heritage assets](#) can be accessed online via the Historic England website. World Heritage Sites are listed separately by UNESCO. Local authority websites, the local authority Historic Environment Record or the [Heritage Gateway](#) may help to locate conservation areas and other locally designated assets.

The **recent local crime context and national heritage crime context** should be taken into account. Local police neighbourhood teams (see local force website or dial 101) should be able to provide useful insights and recent statistics. Recent local crime data is also available via the [police.uk website](#). If there have been recent crimes against heritage assets that are local or similar to the asset being assessed, then this may suggest that such offences are prevalent, unless police have detained the suspects responsible. It is important that any consideration of local crime levels takes into account relevance. For example, when considering the crime risks against an unoccupied Grade II* Georgian listed house with original fireplaces, the local shoplifting rate is unlikely to be relevant. However, if there have been several undetected burglaries locally where architectural fabric has been removed, then this is likely to be relevant. The police.uk website will enable local crime incident levels to be reviewed and local police contacts to be identified. Information about national trends may be available from the media, Historic England and other heritage organisations and specialist insurance companies. In compiling an assessment of the local/national crime context, it may also be useful to consider why criminals may be motivated to commit heritage crime. This may help to select the right prevention or mitigation measures for the particular heritage asset under consideration. Common motivations for heritage crime include:

- criminal negligence (for example, climbing the walls of a disused listed building, causing foreseeable damage to the roof and structure)
- financial gain (for example, stealing something to sell for profit)
- ideology (for example, graffiti related to gang membership)
- attachment (for example, theft by illicit collectors)

It is important to note that crime may already have occurred in the form of unauthorised work carried out without the necessary consent. Before buying a designated property, a prospective owner is advised to check that all the necessary permissions are in place; otherwise, they could be liable for a fine or reinstatement when the illicit nature of the work becomes apparent.

Having considered this background information, the next step is to **identify the principal risks** that may affect the asset and to systematically record these in order to assess the impact and likelihood of each eventuality. In doing so, it is important to take a view on all of the information available, including how current and credible it is, and to take into account any mitigation measures already in place. These are actions that are intended to reduce or limit risk but may not remove it entirely. It is not possible to be exact, but consideration of 5 to 10 key risks for a church or substantial heritage building might be a reasonable number to assess in the first instance. While it is important to be alert to emerging crime trends and developments nationally, it is equally important to avoid being unduly swayed by anecdotal reporting or commercial interests that may not be entirely independent. Careful completion of the framework should enable relative risks to be quantified.

Once the key risks have been assessed, taking into account the relevant Quick Reference Summary and also the more comprehensive Historic England 2023 [Heritage Crime Prevention](#), a security **action plan** for the site should be developed and recorded, with a view to reducing or mitigating the risk. Where particularly unusual, serious or complex risks have been identified, specialist advice from an accredited police or independent crime prevention specialist may be required. If serious organised crime or terrorism are considered a potential risk, then specialist police advice should always be sought.

Historic England will now be making the scoring document available alongside the guidance document and without a completed example.

Inevitably, resources for preventative measures are likely to be limited. Implementing the most cost-effective measures first may, in some cases, help to reduce the risk enough to avoid spending large sums on more elaborate crime prevention measures. It is good practice, and likely to be cost-effective, to ensure that any heritage crime action plan is aligned with plans relating to other risk assessments, such as those for fire or flood.

A system of regular reviews and checks to ensure that all assets are present and in good order forms part of a sound and sustainable conservation regime for all heritage assets. This includes ensuring that there is a complete and up-to-date inventory, accompanied by high-quality photographs, to scale, showing identifying markings or damage. It is important to note that threats may change over time and specific events or activities may raise or lower the threat. In such cases, the higher level of threat should be recorded for assessment purposes, or an event-specific risk assessment and action plan should be developed. Major changes, such as the decision to open a building to the public, should trigger a reassessment.

Retention and storage of risk assessment documents

It is important that documentation relating to heritage crime risks, including plans, photographs and details of security measures, is kept securely, and ideally in a separate location to the asset it relates to. This is to ensure that this documentation is not lost if the heritage asset itself is compromised by events such as fire, theft or damage. Strong password protection should be used to secure documents, and in the case of high-value assets, encryption should be considered.

Countering new and emerging crime threats

In the same way that new crime trends and methods emerge and evolve, so, too, do the counter measures that can prevent crime or help to bring offenders to justice. Specialist technical and scientific expertise is secured through the Heritage and Wildlife Crime Innovation group, convened by Historic England in conjunction with the Centre for Heritage, University of Kent. This aims to:

- identify threats, risks and vulnerabilities within historic and natural environments
- identify the need for tactics or techniques, and either adapt existing approaches or develop new ones
- secure funding and achieve implementation
- integrate these themes within research programmes from undergraduate to doctoral level, enhancing employment opportunities for students and early career researchers

Review of this document

This risk assessment methodology was developed during 2019–21. It is anticipated that, in due course, further work will be undertaken to review its effectiveness and to consider creating a risk assessment app and associated database to facilitate data collection.

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Quick Reference Summary: Heritage Buildings

Figure 2:
Bayleaf Farmhouse, a
timber-framed Wealden
hall house originally from
Chiddingstone in Kent,
re-erected at the Weald
and Downland Museum in
Singleton, West Sussex.
© Andy Bliss



Heritage crime against buildings

This category includes all standing buildings, whatever their purpose, such as houses, places of worship, farms and industrial buildings. It also includes war memorials, drinking fountains, boundary walls, gate-piers and ha-has. While the definition of ‘standing buildings’ is broad, it is important to note that different crime risks may apply depending on the type and state of the building under consideration. Buildings that are open and impossible to secure, such as ruins, may require different crime prevention solutions to those suitable for an enclosed building.

Note: An offence of burglary under the Theft Act 1968 requires proof of trespass, and it also requires a building to have a roof and walls.

Most buildings built before 1700 that survive in anything like their original condition, and also many dating from 1700 to 1850, will be listed. In total, some 380,000 buildings are listed on the [National Heritage List for England](#) (NHLE).

Approximately 2.5 per cent are listed at Grade I (of exceptional interest), 5.8 per cent at Grade II* (of more than special interest) and 91.7 per cent at Grade II (of special interest).

It is important to recognise that designations may apply singly or in combination. Some buildings are protected as Scheduled Monuments under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. A number of individual buildings in England have World Heritage Site status and some buildings form part of such a site alongside a landscape or archaeological component. The formal definition of [heritage asset](#) includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing). It is recognised that people may informally regard other local sites as of historical significance. The current record of nationally designated assets is available at historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/

Historically, roofed buildings were designed to keep the elements out and to keep the occupants and contents safe. Over time, crime threats have changed and original design and security measures, such as those used in the medieval period, are not always effective against today's crime threats. Buildings may be attacked in order to steal fabric, especially metal, stone or architectural features. They may be damaged or even destroyed due to crime or anti-social behaviour. In some instances, a historic building may suffer collateral harm, such as damage to fabric as the result of a burglary or water ingress following the removal of lead flashings or a decorative rainwater hopper.

Unauthorised works by owners (that is, without appropriate consent) may also constitute a criminal offence. In assessing the crime risks to a building, the surroundings should be taken into account. This will bring to light issues such as access and natural surveillance, which are relevant to security. Parks and gardens can be heritage assets in their own right. If the setting of a building includes a large expanse of park or garden, which itself contains heritage assets, then it is recommended that a separate risk assessment for that area is conducted, using the Quick Reference Summary: Historic Landscapes.

Buildings as designated assets

The [NHLE](#) is the only official, up-to-date register of all nationally designated historic buildings and sites in England, with the exception of World Heritage Sites, which are designated by UNESCO. The principal designations for buildings as heritage assets are as follows:

Scheduled monuments

Historic buildings or sites included in the Schedule of Monuments compiled by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. The regime is set out in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas

Act 1979. This Act also designates five historic city centres (Canterbury, Chester, Exeter, Hereford and York) as areas of archaeological importance. This is intended to prevent important archaeological sites from being damaged or destroyed without at least allowing for some investigation and recording first.

Listed buildings

The list maintained by Historic England includes buildings of national importance, ranging from simple structures such as milestones through to royal churches such as Westminster Abbey (Grade I listed), protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Registered parks and gardens

These may form part of the curtilage of a building. Registration is a ‘material consideration’ in the planning process, meaning that planning authorities must consider the impact of any proposed development on the landscape’s special character. For information about the different crime prevention approaches required, please see [Section 4](#).

Registered battlefields

Historic England’s Register of Historic Battlefields identifies 47 important English sites. To merit registration, a battlefield has to have been the location of an engagement of national significance, and to be capable of close definition on the ground. The purpose of the register is to offer protection via the planning process. In some cases, memorials and other buildings stand within the defined battlefield area.

World Heritage Sites

UNESCO has designated 20 cultural sites in England. Protection is secured via the planning system and the designations referred to above, which often apply to many individual heritage assets within such sites.

Offences against heritage assets include generic criminal offences, such as theft, criminal damage and arson. There is also a range of offences against specific heritage legislation, such as the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003.

Conservation areas

These are defined by local authorities and allow extra planning controls and considerations to be applied to protect historic and architectural elements that make the place special.

Key threats

- Theft or unauthorised removal of fabric from a building. This may be historic fabric, such as architectural stone, leaded windows or oak roof screens. Lead roofing material may be of historic interest or it may be modern, but it is frequently stolen due to its high value. If roofing material is removed, there is a substantial risk of serious collateral damage to the building and its historic fabric being caused by water ingress. In addition to the loss of historic fabric, information about the building and its construction and evolution may also be lost.
- Theft of historic artefacts or removable items from within the building.
- Harm to the building as a result of crimes such as criminal damage or [arson](#).
- Anti-social behaviour in or near a heritage asset – for example, [graffiti](#) or public urination – which may cause harm to a building directly or create an environment where crime is perceived to flourish (which may prompt further offending).
- Unauthorised works that require [listed building consent](#) by owners or occupiers amount to a criminal offence, committed either by the person who carried them out or by anyone who caused them to be carried out. This applies to works inside and outside a building that predates July 1948, as well as to the [curtilage](#) of a building or other structure. Examples of such works include changing the windows, removing historic plasterwork and altering the plan form in a listed building. Consent is required for any changes that affect the building and so its special interest. Unauthorised works do not escape attention and many are identified during conveyancing. When acquiring a designated property, a purchaser should establish that all works have been approved (consented) or they may be liable for a fine and/or the cost of reinstatement.
- Illicit trading in cultural property removed from historic buildings.

Note: Some heritage crimes, such as racist or homophobic graffiti on a heritage asset, also constitute hate crimes. These may attract significant public concern and will be treated as a high priority by police.

Principal mitigation measures

Note: Some crime prevention measures may not be appropriate in historic areas or sites as they may cause damage to or detract from heritage assets. Consent may be required before certain work can be undertaken (for example, listed building consent or, in the case of places of worship under Ecclesiastical Exemption and their surroundings, an equivalent denominational authorisation).

Buildings generally have an inherent level of security. Additional situational or physical security measures, such as locks and alarms, can significantly improve security levels. However, in heritage buildings, two important aspects need to be considered. First, with listed or other designated assets, it may not be permissible or appropriate to instal some types of security apparatus or technology as it may harm historic fabric. Second, restricting access may work against a desire to promote public value and to make historic buildings accessible to the public. With some church buildings, accessibility may also reflect the ethos of the faith community. Importantly, therefore, making historic buildings accessible may form part of a social crime prevention strategy that seeks to engage local people or ‘capable guardians’ who will care for and watch out for the building, by joining a Heritage Watch scheme, for example. Often a blend of carefully chosen, cost-effective, situational and social crime prevention measures can help to reduce the risks while allowing promotion of public value and other accessibility considerations to be addressed.

Principal mitigation measures may include:

- Carefully managing publicly available information and imagery to limit the risk of cyber-enabled crime, balanced with the need to maximise public value and accessibility. Thieves, for example, may research information online to identify items to steal or potential weaknesses in security.
- Simple, well-placed signage that clearly defines public and private areas and highlights that security measures are in place. In some cases, illumination may act as a deterrent to night-time criminal activity. A careful balance needs to be struck, because signage and illumination may harm some sites and their settings. Consent may also be required. Signage should be carefully worded to avoid providing information that may attract criminal activity, such as illicit metal detecting.
- Creating the impression of occupancy by leaving lights on, playing music, putting up signs indicating that security guards, staff or volunteers regularly circulate, and so on.

- Using ‘hard landscaping’ (for example, walls) to limit vehicle access close to buildings.
- Installing security fittings for pictures or other portable items to prevent them being removed swiftly.
- Using crime prevention technology, such as alarms (including roof, intruder and fire alarms as appropriate), CCTV or ‘geo-fencing’ technology, which detects movement within a defined area. Such technology should be signposted where appropriate.
- Prompt repairs and removal of graffiti and litter to create the impression that heritage assets are well maintained. This is particularly relevant to [vacant buildings](#). Attention to non-heritage crimes, such as car crime, walk-in thefts or, in churches, collection box thefts may help to discourage heritage crime offences, too.
- Using defensive landscaping measures that deter inappropriate access (for example, installing anti-climb strips on fencing or planting thorny plants) or improving natural surveillance (for example, removing trees that obscure visibility of church roofs or installing night-time illumination), if permitted.
- Securing tools and climbing aids (ladders, wheeled rubbish bins, and so on), which can make crime easier to commit.
- Using forensic property marking, where permitted, including marking metal roofing material. Marked property should be highlighted by signage. This approach may require consent in the case of designated heritage assets.
- Replacing high-value or significant moveable items with replicas (after seeking appropriate consent where required). For example, in exceptional circumstances, where a building is affected by theft, a lead roof or part of it may be replaced with an [alternative metal roofing material](#).
- Ensuring strict control of keys, alarm codes, and so on and checking that relevant people such as neighbours or Heritage Watch scheme members know how to contact key holders in an emergency.
- A systematic approach to locking the building, including ensuring that no one is secreted on the premises. Periodic review of maintenance and suitability of security measures in place.
- Making neighbours and local guardians aware that they will always be notified before contractors work on the building, to prevent criminals posing as legitimate workers.

- Encouraging appropriate ‘adaptive reuse’ of heritage buildings to increase occupancy and natural surveillance, for example using a little-visited church for community events.
- Employing security personnel or encouraging staff or volunteers to take on a custodian or oversight role for sites. This may include volunteer police community support officers and volunteer police cadets.
- Establishing Heritage Watch schemes involving local people, historical and archaeological societies and other ‘capable guardians’. Visitors may also help to provide oversight of open buildings.
- Other bespoke social crime prevention initiatives aimed at reducing the incidence of heritage crime and anti-social behaviour and promoting community guardianship of heritage buildings. For example, in areas where anti-social behaviour is prevalent, initiatives aimed at encouraging local young people to visit and use heritage buildings to promote a sense of community ownership and care.
- Education and briefing for police officers, other law enforcement personnel and staff and volunteers so that they are aware of the significance of local heritage assets and are better able to respond to the risks to them.
- Where appropriate, and in less serious cases, using early intervention and consideration of diversion of offenders via the police, using Out of Court Disposals (such as Community Resolution and Conditional Cautions). These enable offenders to be educated about the harm caused by heritage crime offences and also provide reparation.
- Although not a preventative measure, good quality photographs are of vital importance in identifying and recovering stolen objects. Overall views and detailed photographs of unique markings, such as damage, repairs, markings or inscriptions, should be taken. Ideally, a scale marker or an object of known size should be included in the image.

Sources of advice/information

When assessing the crime risk to heritage assets in the landscape, Historic England is an important source of information and advice. For more heritage crime prevention guidance and advice, see Historic England guidance on [Heritage Crime Prevention](#).

It may also be helpful to make contact with the local police, including, where appropriate, the heritage crime liaison officer or crime prevention officer (also known as designing out crime officers or similar). Alternatively, advice may be sought from an independent and accredited crime prevention adviser. Accredited crime prevention training for police and others is provided by [Police Crime Prevention Initiatives](#).

It is important to be aware that not all police or independent crime prevention advisers will have experience or training in dealing with historic assets, and some advice that would be helpful for modern buildings may not be appropriate in historic areas or sites. In particular, consent may be required before certain work can be undertaken. The insurer should also be contacted, as they may have specific requirements or restrictions, for example on contractor accreditation.

4

Quick Reference Summary: Historic Landscapes

Figure 3:
The Cursus barrow group
and the Cursus in the
World Heritage Site at
Stonehenge, Wiltshire.
© Historic England



Heritage crime in the landscape

This chapter focuses on landscapes including buried archaeology in landscape settings. For sites on or below the foreshore see [Section 5](#).

Heritage assets proliferate in the English landscape. For example, there are almost 1,700 registered parks and gardens and 47 registered battlefields in England. Heritage assets in the landscape include all designated assets in the open air that are inland or sit above the mean low-water mark – on or above the foreshore. Designated heritage assets in the historic landscape include World Heritage Sites, scheduled monuments (under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979), listed buildings, registered battlefields, registered parks and gardens and conservation areas. Such assets are not confined to rural areas; many landscapes now sit within villages, towns and cities, even if historically they were rural. While World Heritage Sites are separately recorded by UNESCO, the current record of nationally designated assets is available online at historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/

It is important to recognise that designations may apply singly or in combination. For example, a scheduled monument may be located within a registered battlefield or World Heritage Site; a listed building may be within a registered park or garden. The formal definition of [heritage asset](#) includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing). It is recognised that people may informally regard other local sites as of historical significance.

Heritage within historic landscapes (including buried archaeology) may be exposed to a range of crime threats. Situated in the open air and not necessarily occupied, the area may be too large for access to be adequately controlled. As a result, a historic landscape is often more susceptible to criminal interference than an occupied building. Additionally, interference may only be detected some while after it has occurred, due to the remote nature of the site or infrequency of checks. Scheduled monuments may be damaged, for example, by unauthorised groundworks, off-road driving (Section 34, Road Traffic Act 1988: Sections 59 and 60 Police Reform Act 2002), or unlawful dumping of waste material (fly-tipping) within the boundaries of the monument. Illicit metal detecting (night-hawking) may involve theft from the landowner but may also interfere with buried archaeological layers, harming our future understanding of archaeological remains and battlefields. Parks and gardens may be at risk from thieves who steal architectural stone, garden statuary or other features. Open spaces, especially in urban areas, may attract anti-social behaviour, which, although not necessarily intentional, may present a threat to heritage assets due to recklessness or negligence. Unauthorised works by owners (that is, without appropriate consent) also constitute a criminal offence.

Designated assets in the landscape

The [National Heritage List for England](#) is the only official, up-to-date register of all nationally designated historic buildings and sites in England, with the exception of World Heritage Sites, which are designated by UNESCO. The principal designations for heritage assets in landscape settings are as follows:

Scheduled monuments

Historic buildings or sites included in the Schedule of Monuments compiled by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. The regime is set out in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. This Act also designates five historic city centres (Canterbury, Chester, Exeter, Hereford and York) as areas of archaeological importance. This is intended to prevent important archaeological sites from being damaged or destroyed without at least allowing for some investigation and recording first.

Listed buildings

The list maintained by Historic England includes buildings of national significance, ranging from simple structures such as milestones through

to royal churches such as Westminster Abbey (Grade I listed), protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Landscape settings may include buildings that are listed, ranging from dwellings to statues and fountains. Reference should be made to the accompanying [Quick Reference Summary: Heritage Buildings](#).

Registered parks and gardens

These may form part of the curtilage of a building. Registration is a ‘material consideration’ in the planning process, meaning that planning authorities must consider the impact of any proposed development on the landscape’s special character.

Registered battlefields

Historic England’s Register of Historic Battlefields identifies 47 important English battlefields. To merit registration, a battlefield has to have been the location of an engagement of national significance, and to be capable of close definition on the ground. The purpose of the register is to offer protection via the planning process. In some cases, memorials and other buildings stand within the defined battlefield area.

Military remains

The Protection of Military Remains Act 1986 protects military graves, including individual vessels and all military aircraft. Interference with military aircraft crash sites, including salvage or excavation operations, is prohibited without a licence.

World Heritage Sites

UNESCO has designated 20 cultural sites in England. Protection is secured via the planning system and the designations referred to above, which often apply to many individual heritage assets within such sites.

Offences against heritage assets include generic criminal offences, such as theft, criminal damage and arson. There is also a range of offences against specific heritage legislation, such as the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, the Treasure Act 1996 and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003.

Conservation areas

These are defined by local authorities and allow extra planning controls and considerations to be applied to protect historic and architectural elements that make the place special.

Key threats

- Theft or removal of heritage assets (including by illicit metal detecting) without authorisation from the landowner and/or on designated sites that are subject to legal protection, such as a scheduled monument. In many cases, such activity may also cause the loss of vital archaeological information and context. In designed landscapes (such as parks and gardens), statuary and other architectural features may be highly valuable and significant. However, displayed in the open air, they present a dilemma between accessibility and security.
- Illicit recovery of articles from the landscape, protected by the Treasure Act 1996, which is not reported to HM Coroner.
- Harm to heritage assets in the landscape as a consequence of activities such as fly-tipping, lighting fires or quad-biking.
- Harms to the landscape and associated buildings and monuments caused by crimes such as criminal damage (including graffiti) or [arson](#).
- Unauthorised works by owners, such as unauthorised groundworks on scheduled monuments, breaches in ha-has, the erection of a garden building or the destruction of parterres.
- Illicit trading in cultural property removed from historic landscapes.

Note: Some heritage crimes, such as posting racist or homophobic graffiti on a heritage asset, also constitute [hate crimes](#). These may attract significant public concern and will be treated as a high priority by police.

Principal mitigation measures

Note: Some crime prevention measures may not be appropriate in historic areas or sites as they may cause damage to or detract from heritage assets. Consent may be required before certain work can be undertaken (for example, listed building consent or scheduled monument consent or, in the case of places of worship under [Ecclesiastical Exemption](#) and their surroundings, an equivalent denominational authorisation.)

The environment of historic landscapes generally offers limited protection from heritage crime, as enhancements to the security and protection of large open spaces can be difficult and expensive to achieve. Isolating heritage landscapes with the aim of making them secure may be counter-productive, since lack of accessibility may diminish their public value and reduce the pool of potential ‘capable guardians’ who may care for and keep a watchful eye on vulnerable sites. However, a range of situational crime prevention measures (for example, CCTV) and social measures (for example, Heritage Watch schemes) may be used to mitigate threats to such landscapes while allowing public value and accessibility to be maximised.

Principal mitigation measures may include:

- Carefully managing publicly available information and imagery to limit the risk of cyber-enabled crime, balanced with the need to maximise public value and accessibility. Thieves, for example, may research information online to identify items to steal or potential weaknesses in security.
- Simple, well-placed signage that clearly defines public and private areas and highlights that security measures are in place. In some cases, illumination may act as a deterrent to night-time criminal activity. A careful balance needs to be struck, because signage and illumination may harm some sites and their settings. Consent may also be required. Signage should be carefully worded to avoid providing detailed information that may attract criminal activity, such as illicit metal detecting.
- Using crime prevention technology, such as alarms, CCTV or ‘geo-fencing’ technology, which detects movement within a defined area. Such technology should be signposted where appropriate.
- Prompt repairs and removal of graffiti and litter to create the impression that heritage assets are well maintained. This is particularly relevant to [vacant buildings](#) in landscape settings. Attention to non-heritage crimes, such as car crime, may help to discourage heritage crime offences, too.
- Using defensive landscaping measures that deter inappropriate access (for example, installing fencing or planting thorny plants) or improving natural surveillance (for example, removing trees that obscure visibility) in cases where this is justified, taking into account the heritage values of the site.
- Using forensic property marking, where permitted, at suitable sites. Marked property should be highlighted by signage. This approach may require consent in the case of designated heritage assets.
- Replacing high-value or significant moveable items with replicas (after seeking appropriate consent where required).

- Employing security personnel or encouraging staff or volunteers to take on a guardianship or oversight role for sites. This may include volunteer police community support officers and volunteer police cadets.
- Establishing Heritage Watch schemes involving local people, historical and archaeological societies, responsible metal detecting groups and other ‘capable guardians’.
- Other bespoke social crime prevention initiatives aimed at reducing the incidence of heritage crime and anti-social behaviour and promoting community guardianship to protect historic landscapes. For example, in areas where anti-social behaviour is prevalent, initiatives aimed at encouraging local young people to participate in activities that promote a sense of community ownership and care.
- Education and briefing for police officers, other law enforcement personnel and staff and volunteers so that they are aware of the significance of local heritage assets and are able to respond to the risks to them.
- Where appropriate, and in less serious cases, using early intervention and consideration of diversion of offenders via the police, using Out of Court Disposals (such as Community Resolution and Conditional Cautions). These enable offenders to be educated about the harm caused by heritage crime offences and also provide reparation.
- Although not a preventative measure, good quality photographs are of vital importance in identifying and recovering stolen objects. Overall views and detailed photographs of unique markings, such as damage, repairs, markings or inscriptions, should be taken. Ideally, a scale marker or an object of known size should be included in the image.

Sources of advice/information

When assessing the crime risk to heritage assets in the landscape, Historic England is an important source of information and advice. For more heritage crime prevention guidance and advice, see Historic England guidance on [Heritage Crime Prevention](#).

It may also be helpful to make contact with the local police, including, where appropriate, the heritage crime liaison officer or crime prevention officer (also known as designing out crime officers or similar).

Alternatively, advice may be sought from an independent and accredited crime prevention adviser. Accredited crime prevention training for police and others is provided by [policecpi.com](#).

It is important to be aware that not all police or independent crime prevention advisers will have experience or training in dealing with historic assets, and some advice that would be helpful for modern contexts may not be appropriate in historic areas or sites. In particular, consent may be required before certain work can be undertaken. The insurer should also be contacted, as they may have specific requirements or restrictions, for example on contractor accreditation.

5

Quick Reference Summary: Maritime Heritage Assets

Figure 4:
A diver surveying on the
wreck of HMS *Colossus*,
Isles of Scilly.
© Cornwall & Isles of Scilly
Maritime Archaeology
Society



Heritage crime in the maritime zone

This chapter deals with maritime heritage assets located within the inter-tidal zone/foreshore and at sea.

UK jurisdiction at sea extends to 12 nautical miles (22km), defined as territorial waters under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982. The UK has also claimed an exclusive economic zone, which extends up to 200 nautical miles (370km) from the coast, regarding the use and exploitation of marine resources, including energy production. Archaeological assets in this zone are defined as 'foreign ancient monuments'. England's coastline is densely populated with a proliferation of archaeological remains, including those in previously terrestrial areas, such as the land bridge now under the North Sea, wrecked vessels and military remains. Many are fully submerged up to and including the sub-tidal zone (the area exposed briefly at extreme low tides). Others sit within the inter-tidal zone, the area above the mean low-water mark and accessible at low tide. The [UK Wrecks Database](#) alone records some 70,000 locations, of which approximately 20,000 are named vessels. There are 54 designated wreck sites in English waters (as of 1 September 2019). Extensive numbers of sites or features are

recorded in [Historic Environment Records](#). However, relatively few wrecks or sites are designated or subject to other statutory protection, and many remain unrecorded.

Many waterside buildings and structures are designated as listed buildings, including harbour walls, quays, piers, lighthouses and waterfront properties. These structures often form or extend below the high-water mark. It is important to recognise that designations may apply singly or in combination. For example, selected buildings of ‘national importance’ may be scheduled as sites protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. The formal definition of [heritage asset](#) includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing). It is recognised that people may informally regard other local sites as of historical significance. For more detailed guidance regarding buildings, please refer to [Section 3](#).

A range of heritage crime offences may be committed against maritime heritage assets. Some are unique to the maritime environment, such as unlawful interference with protected wrecks. Others, such as unlawful interference with buried archaeology on a scheduled monument, unauthorised works or criminal damage to a listed building, are common to both maritime and land-based environments.

Designated assets in the maritime zone

The [National Heritage List for England](#) is the only official, up-to-date register of all nationally designated historic buildings and sites in England. The principal designations for maritime heritage assets in the maritime environment are as follows:

Protected wrecks

The Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 allows the Secretary of State to designate a protected area around a wreck to prevent uncontrolled interference. These protected areas are likely to contain the remains of a vessel or its contents, which are of historical, artistic or archaeological importance.

Military remains

The Protection of Military Remains Act 1986 protects military graves, including individual designated vessels and all military aircraft, from unauthorised interference. Salvage or excavation operations are prohibited without a licence.

Scheduled monuments

Historic buildings or sites included in the Schedule of Monuments compiled by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. The regime is set out in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. In the maritime environment, this includes wrecks in the inter-tidal zone and also (as at September 2020) 13 fully submerged scheduled sites.

Listed buildings

The list maintained by Historic England includes buildings of national importance, ranging from simple structures such as milestones through to royal churches such as Westminster Abbey (Grade I listed), protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. It also includes buildings in the inter-tidal zone or foreshore, such as pleasure piers and harbour walls.

World Heritage Sites

UNESCO has designated 20 cultural sites in England. Protection is secured via the planning system and the designations referred to above, which often apply to many individual heritage assets within such sites.

It is important to note that while the proportion of designated sites in the maritime environment remains low in relation to those that are recorded, this may not necessarily indicate that the latter are, in all cases, of lesser significance.

Offences against heritage assets include generic criminal offences, such as theft, criminal damage and arson. There is also a range of offences against specific heritage legislation, including those referred to above and legislation such as the Treasure Act 1996, the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003 and the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

Property found in the sea or on the shore may come from a vessel and, therefore, be considered ‘wreck’ material. Section 236 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 requires wreck material to be reported to the Receiver of Wreck. Reports of any recovered wreck material must be made within specified timescales. (See [Sources of Advice/Information](#) below for contact details.) Wreck material is not treasure. Any [treasure found on the foreshore](#) (between high and low mean water) that does not come from a wreck must be reported to HM Coroner.

Conservation areas

These are defined by local authorities and allow extra planning controls and considerations to be applied to protect historic and architectural elements that make the place special.

Key threats

- Uncontrolled salvage of material from wrecks, resulting in loss of archaeological information about stratigraphy and the context from which the material has come.
- Unlawful salvage from designated wreck sites or failure to report salvage to the Receiver of Wreck (potential breach of maritime legislation and/or theft/handling stolen goods offences).
- Interference with protected wrecks through activities such as dredging.
- Illicit recovery of wreck material from the maritime environment (not reported to the Receiver of Wreck) or treasure from the foreshore (not reported to HM Coroner).
- Interference with designated heritage assets, such as scheduled monuments, in the inter-tidal zone through activities such as bait digging or illicit metal detecting. Such activity may destroy fragile archaeological evidence of ancient landscapes.
- Other unlawful activity in the maritime environment, such as criminal damage caused by graffiti or [arson](#), which harms heritage assets.
- Illicit trading in cultural property removed from historic maritime sites.

Note: Some heritage crimes, such as racist or homophobic graffiti on a heritage asset, also constitute [hate crimes](#). These may attract significant public concern and will be treated as a high priority by police.

Principal mitigation measures

Note: Some crime prevention measures may not be appropriate in historic areas or sites as they may cause damage to or detract from heritage assets. Consent may be required before certain work can be undertaken (for example, listed building consent in the case of a pier). Work on a protected wreck site would require a licence under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973, and also, potentially, a marine licence, depending on the type of work to be undertaken.

The maritime environment itself offers some degree of protection from crimes against wrecks, features and sites, since it may be remote and/or difficult to access and may require specialist training and equipment to operate in. Conversely, the lack of capable guardians, community surveillance and, suitable scientific and technological crime prevention measures present different crime prevention challenges to those that apply on land.

Principal mitigation measures may include:

- Carefully managing publicly available information and imagery to limit the risk of cyber-enabled crime, balanced with the need to maximise public value and accessibility. Thieves, for example, may research information online to identify items to steal or potential weaknesses in security.
- Simple, well-placed signage at appropriate sites, highlighting that security measures are in place. In some instances, in the foreshore area, and where feasible, illumination may act as a deterrent to night-time criminal activity. Signage should be carefully worded to avoid providing detailed information that may attract criminal activity, such as illicit metal detecting.
- Prompt repairs and removal of graffiti or other signs of crime to create the impression that assets are well maintained. This is particularly relevant to [vacant buildings](#).
- Using crime prevention technology at suitable sites (for example, CCTV overlooking sites in the inter-tidal zone).
- Using forensic property marking, where permitted, at suitable sites, including unique identifier security marking when a marine product becomes available. Marked property should be highlighted by signage. This approach may require consent in the case of designated heritage assets.
- Encouraging more 'licensees' to act as custodians for protected wreck sites.

- Establishing ‘dive trails’ (including provision of interpretive material to licensed divers) in the vicinity of sites, thereby encouraging responsible visitors to keep a watchful eye on sites and deter anyone considering illicit access to the site.
- Establishing Heritage Watch schemes or linking with Marine Watch schemes, diving clubs, historical and archaeological societies and other ‘capable guardians’ operating in the maritime environment. This may potentially include statutory agencies, the [National Coastwatch Institution](#) and the [Protected Wreck Association](#).
- Other bespoke social crime prevention initiatives aimed at reducing the incidence of heritage crime and anti-social behaviour and promoting community guardianship in the maritime environment. For example, in areas where anti-social behaviour is prevalent, initiatives aimed at encouraging local young people to participate in activities to promote a sense of community ownership and care.
- Education and briefing for police officers, Maritime and Coastguard Agency officers and other law enforcement personnel so that they are aware of local maritime heritage assets and are alert to the risks to them.
- Where appropriate, and in less serious cases, using early intervention and consideration of diversion of offenders via the police, using Out of Court Disposals (such as Community Resolution and Conditional Cautions). These enable offenders to be educated about the harm caused by heritage crime offences and also provide reparation.
- Although not a preventative measure, good quality photographs are of vital importance in identifying and recovering stolen objects. Overall views and detailed photographs of unique markings, such as damage, repairs, markings or inscriptions, should be taken. Ideally, a scale marker or an object of known size should be included in the image.

Sources of advice/information

When assessing the crime risk to heritage assets in the maritime environment, Historic England is an important source of information and advice. For more heritage crime prevention guidance and advice, see Historic England guidance on [Heritage Crime Prevention](#).

Contact with the specialist maritime team may be made via email: maritime@historicengland.org.uk

For more detailed information about protected wreck sites, see historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/accessing-englands-protected-wreck-sites-guidance-notes/heag075-guidance-notes-for-divers-and-archaeologists/

The Receiver of Wreck at the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (contactable by email at: row@mca.gov.uk) is also an important source of advice. See gov.uk/guidance/wreck-and-salvage-law

It may also be helpful to make contact with the local police, including, where appropriate, the heritage crime liaison officer or crime prevention officer (also known as designing out crime officers or similar). Alternatively, advice may be sought from an independent and accredited crime prevention adviser. Accredited crime prevention training for police and others is provided by policecpi.com.

It is important to be aware that not all police or independent crime prevention advisers will have experience or training in dealing with historic assets, and some advice that would be helpful for modern contexts may not be appropriate in historic areas or sites. In particular, consent may be required before certain work can be undertaken. The insurer should also be contacted, as they may have specific requirements or restrictions, for example on contractor accreditation.

The Protected Wreck Association may also be a useful source of advice and information. See protectedwrecks.org.uk/

National Historic Ships UK, which advises owners of historic ships and boats on a range of areas including security, provides guidance similar to that produced by Historic England for listed buildings. See nationalhistoricships.org.uk/

Assessment

A regular review of heritage crime risks is recommended, as these may change over time and prevention measures may need to be updated. A periodic re-run of this risk assessment process will help to calibrate and track progress against an established baseline.

A stand-alone fillable version of the Heritage Crime Risk Assessment Framework form can be [downloaded here](#).

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