



- Department for Culture Media & Sport (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-culture-media-sport>)

See more information about this Policy paper (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-conservation-of-historic-buildings-and-monuments>)

Policy paper

## 2010 to 2015 government policy: conservation of historic buildings and monuments

Updated 8 May 2015

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This is a copy of a document that stated a policy of the 2010 to 2015 Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government. The previous URL of this page was <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/protecting-conserving-and-providing-access-to-the-historic-environment-in-england> (<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/protecting-conserving-and-providing-access-to-the-historic-environment-in-england>) Current policies can be found at the GOV.UK policies list (<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies>).

### Issue

The historic environment is made up of the buildings, monuments, sites and landscapes that reflect our history.

If we did not have measures in place to protect and conserve the historic environment, important places would risk being changed and losing what makes them special, or being destroyed and lost forever.

We are responsible for protecting and conserving England's historic environment for the benefit of present and future generations, and for helping people access and enjoy these 'heritage assets'.

### Actions

We look after the historic environment by:

- promoting the understanding, valuing, caring and enjoyment of the historic environment through funding English Heritage (<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk>)
- nominating places in the UK for World Heritage Site status
- protecting buildings of special architectural or historic interest by giving them listed status, which prevents them being demolished, extended or altered without permission
- protecting nationally important sites and monuments of archaeological or historic interest by giving them scheduled status (<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/protecting-conserving-and-providing-access-to-the-historic-environment-in-england/supporting-pages/protecting-ancient-monuments-through-the-scheduling-system>), which protects them from being changed without permission
- protecting shipwreck sites of archaeological, historical or artistic importance by giving them protected wreck site status

- allowing charities and faith groups to claim grants equal to the VAT they pay on maintaining memorials and listed places of worship
- co-sponsoring the Churches Conservation Trust (<http://www.visitchurches.org.uk/>) with the Church of England, which maintains over 340 churches of architectural, historical or archaeological importance.
- appointing the Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund (<http://www.hlf.org.uk>), which gives out grants of National Lottery money, and making sure it meets its funding agreements

## Bills and legislation

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/contents>) sets out the rules for listed buildings.

The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1979/46>) sets out the rules for scheduled monuments.

The Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1973/33>) sets out the rules for protected wreck sites.

## Appendix 1: nominating places in the UK for World Heritage Site Status

This was a supporting detail page of the main policy document.

World Heritage Sites (<http://whc.unesco.org/>) are places, ranging from forests and lakes to buildings and cities, that are 'listed' by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/>). Places are listed as World Heritage Sites because of their special cultural or physical significance.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is responsible for making sure the UK complies with UNESCO's World Heritage Convention, and for nominating UK sites for World Heritage status.

The UK currently has 28 World Heritage Sites ([http://www.unesco.org.uk/world\\_heritage\\_sites\\_in\\_the\\_uk](http://www.unesco.org.uk/world_heritage_sites_in_the_uk)).

### The nomination process

We nominate UK sites from a tentative list of future nominations to be World Heritage Sites (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/state=gb>), which UNESCO's expert advisers (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/advisorybodies/>) assess.

Read about the selection criteria on UNESCO's website (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/>).

Sites on the tentative list which want to be nominated to be World Heritage Site have to complete a technical evaluation. The next round of technical evaluations takes place in Autumn 2013.

You can also view the 'state of conservation reports' (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-culture-media-sport/series/state-of-conservation-reports>) and 'statements of outstanding universal value' (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-culture-media-sport/series/statements-of-outstanding-universal-value>) that accompany each World Heritage Site.

## Appendix 2: protecting shipwreck sites

This was a supporting detail page of the main policy document.

Because of their particular archaeological, historical or artistic importance, we protect certain wrecked vessel sites at sea from unauthorised interference. We protect them by designating a restricted area around the site.

You can view a map of protected shipwreck sites in English waters (<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/our-planning-role/consent/protected-wreck-sites>) on English Heritage's website.

## Licences to dive protected shipwreck sites

You must have a licence to dive in a restricted area around a protected shipwreck site. For more information and how to apply for a licence, visit English Heritage's website to see its advice on diving licenses (<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/our-planning-role/consent/protected-wreck-sites/>).

## Preventing illicit trade

We work closely with the Receiver of Wreck, part of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wreck-and-salvage-law>), to prevent illicit trade in recovered items from protected wreck sites.

You can report wreck material found in the sea or on the sea shore (<https://www.gov.uk/report-wreck-material>).

## Appendix 3: protecting buildings through the listing system

This was a supporting detail page of the main policy document.

Listing a building protects it against unauthorised demolition, alteration or extension because of its special architectural features or historic interest.

English Heritage (<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk>) is responsible for caring for our historic environment, including recommending to ministers in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport which buildings should be listed. After ministers have announced their decision, English Heritage records which buildings are listed.

There are 3 grades of listed building:

- Grade I are buildings of exceptional interest
- Grade II\* are particularly important buildings of more than special interest
- Grade II are buildings of special interest, justifying every effort to preserve them

There are approximately 374,000 listed buildings in England and 92% are Grade II listed.

If you want to find out more about how buildings are listed, you can read our principles of Selection for Listed Buildings publication (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/principles-of-selection-for-listing-buildings>).

You can read more about why a building can be listed and how to apply to list or de-list a building on English Heritage's website (<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/listing/listed-buildings/>).

If you want to challenge a decision to list a building (within 28 days of the notification of a building being listed), find out how in our guide, 'How to challenge our decision to list or not list a building' (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-challenge-our-decision-to-list-or-not-list-a-building>).

## Appendix 4: grants to help maintain religious listed buildings and memorials

This was a supporting detail page of the main policy document.

Important historical buildings and memorials are often owned or run by charities and faith groups. We provide grants that help them to maintain these structures.

## Memorials Grants Scheme

The Memorials Grant Scheme allows faith groups and charities that look after statues and monuments to claim grants equal to the VAT amount they pay on upkeep and improvement works.

You can find out more, including which types of statues, monuments and similar structures are eligible for a grant, on the Memorial Grants Scheme website (<http://www.memorialgrant.org.uk/>).

## Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

The Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme makes grants towards the VAT incurred in making repairs and carrying out alterations to listed buildings mainly used for public worship. The scheme has an annual budget of £42m, and presently receives around 4000 claims each year.

Read about the scheme and how to make a claim on the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme website (<http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/>).

## Appendix 5: protecting ancient monuments through the scheduling system

This was a supporting detail page of the main policy document.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments – often referred to as ‘Scheduled Monuments’ – are nationally important sites that have been given legal protection by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport due to their archaeological or historic interest.

There are currently nearly 20,000 Scheduled Monuments in England. However, other sites of comparable significance are known, but not currently designated as Scheduled Monuments: potentially, further sites still remain to be discovered.

Together these sites help to shed new light on our past, from early prehistory up to the present day.

It is a criminal offence to demolish, destroy, damage, remove, repair, alter or add to Scheduled Monuments, or to carry out flooding or tipping operations on them, without prior permission from the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. This is known as Scheduled Monument Consent (‘SMC’).

- Details of government policy relating to Scheduled Monuments and nationally important but non-scheduled monuments can be found here (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scheduled-monuments-policy-statement>).
- Details of Scheduled Monuments in England can be found here (<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england/>).
- Details of how to request that a site be designated or de-designated as a Scheduled Monument can be found here (<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/online-application-form/>).
- Details of how to challenge a designation or de-designation decision can be found here (<https://www.gov.uk/how-to-challenge-our-decision-to-schedule-or-not-to-schedule-a-monument>).
- Details of how to apply for Scheduled Monument Consent can be found here (<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/our-planning-role/consent/smc/>).