

C.13 Monument management

- [C.13 Monument management](#)
- [C.13.1 Monitoring](#)
- [C.13.2 Management recommendations](#)
- [C.13.3 Management activities](#)
- [C.13.4 Case study, recording monument management: Shooting Butts Barrow, Shropshire](#)

C.13 Monument management#

The risks facing archaeological monuments in the landscape are well documented ([Darvill and Fulton 1998](#)). Many of the potential threats of damage or destruction can be avoided, or significantly reduced, by adopting a sympathetic management regime for the monument. Organisations with direct responsibilities for conservation of the historic environment, such as the National Trust and the National Parks, can implement such a regime using the HER as a key tool. Some HERs are also beginning to record this information as a result of co-operation with departments of their local authorities who manage land (for example Country Parks), through English Heritage-funded projects to secure management agreements for scheduled monuments and as part of historic buildings-at-risk surveys.

Since 1991, the National Trust has been developing a computerised HER system to help deal with management by recording the archaeological monuments in its care and generating reports to determine monitoring programmes, repair works and integrated management strategies. These processes can be divided into three broad interrelated categories: monitoring, to assess the condition of the monument; recommendations, to outline the requirements for preservation and activities, to record work carried out (Figure 30).

Figure 29: Monument management process.

C.13.1 Monitoring#

It is essential that any decisions affecting management are based on a good level of understanding of the individual monument, its place in the wider landscape and the factors which have led to its current state of preservation. The first step to achieving this is the monitoring of the monument in its setting during a field visit. The aim is to provide a 'snapshot' of the monument's condition and to flag up any actual and potential risks or damage caused by factors such as land use, visitors, burrowing animals or natural processes.

The monitoring record is compiled in the field using a proforma. This should include information about:

- stability
- vulnerability
- physical damage
- visibility
- accessibility
- land use on and around the monument.

Figure 30: Successive monument monitoring reports as recorded in the National Trust SMR (© National Trust and exeGesIS SDM Ltd 2007).

Recommendations may be made about the date of the next visit (usually a period of between one month and five years) and any work that should, or should not be, carried out. Photographs may also be taken to form a record of the current state of preservation of the monument, which, over time, can form part of a sequence showing changes in condition or land use.

With the monitoring information entered on to the HER database, reports can be generated. These can include related information, such as site status, location and contact details for the landowner or tenant. Lists can be prepared of vulnerable buildings or monuments that are being monitored, allowing programmes of visits to be planned. The National Trust's Property Warden at Housesteads uses these reports to good effect to help plan monitoring and maintenance inspection work for Hadrian's Wall. With professional guidance, monument-monitoring programmes have also proved suitable projects for local society or special-interest group involvement and can help raise awareness of archaeology and HERs in the local community.

C.13.2 Management recommendations#

Before an informed decision on future management and conservation can be made, other factors which may affect the management of the monument need to be taken into account. These include statutory and non-statutory designations, specialist reports that may have been undertaken (such as biological or ecological survey reports) and any past or current land-management regime already in place. These factors and the data gained through monitoring visits are combined to produce recommendations that set out short and long-term objectives for the preservation of the monument.

Short-term management objectives often concern issues such as ongoing damage to the monument, such as a path causing erosion that needs to be re-routed, or the safety of visitors, such as the need to erect a fence around a hazard. In these instances, the HER can be used to record and monitor the management activity.

Long-term objectives are usually more strategic in their aims and should feed into broader land-management planning, such as the formation of conservation and whole farm plans. The benefits of incorporating archaeological requirements into integrated management strategies are great. If this holistic approach is adopted, threats to the integrity of a monument, inadvertently caused by other land-management regimes, can be anticipated and avoided.

The National Trust's recommendations usually run from one to three paragraphs and are entered on a free text field on the HER. Each monument record will have a series of management recommendations which should be reviewed and updated after each monitoring visit, work programme or change in the factors affecting management. Using the HER, these recommendations can be combined with data from other fields to produce a management report.

C.13.3 Management activities#

Knowledge of what has worked in the past makes it easier to come to an informed decision on what needs to be done and reduces the possibility of inadvertently repeating past mistakes. The recording of work undertaken, whether for routine maintenance, repair or presentation purposes, is therefore an essential part of the monument management process. Using the HER to record these actions makes it possible to keep track of why, when and by whom particular work was, or was not, carried out to a monument.

Such information about monument management activities falls within the [MIDAS](#) definition of an event. Details about the management activity may be entered on an event record. Detailed information about maintenance contracts, including the costs of labour, material and equipment and the repeat schedule for routine maintenance visits, may also be recorded. By entering these details on a HER it is possible to track work, produce new work schedules (using criteria such as

type of work, priority and work pending) and produce reports giving the full management history for a monument.

C.13.4 Case study, recording monument management: Shooting Butts Barrow, Shropshire#

Shooting Butts Barrow illustrates the on-going nature of monument management and how this can be tracked using a HER. A monitoring visit revealed that a modern concrete grouse-shooting hut inserted in the barrow had been badly damaged by vandal action. After careful consideration of all the factors, including the Scheduled Monument designation and the rarity value of the monument (the only recorded disc barrow in Shropshire) management recommendations were prepared. A measured survey of the monument was recommended prior to the complete removal of the hut remains and the partial excavation of this part of the barrow to recover buried soil for dating purposes.

The barrow was situated on common land and, because of this, it was not possible to protect it by a fence. As a remedial measure, loose branches and brambles were placed on the top of the barrow to prevent erosion of the backfilled area. A subsequent monitoring visit recorded that this cover was missing and that erosion by people and sheep was causing damage. This necessitated a re-think of the management regime in place and an update of the recommendations for the monument.

Event records were created for the demolition, excavation and repair work with further details being recorded about the attempt to prevent further erosion. New information was gained from the work, and a radiocarbon determination for the buried soil horizon was added to the existing monument record for the barrow. Subsequent visits were arranged to monitor the effectiveness of the remedial work carried out at the site.