



ENGLISH HERITAGE

# HERITAGE AT RISK

2012

WEST MIDLANDS



# HERITAGE AT RISK

Despite the challenges of recession, the number of sites on the Heritage at Risk Register continues to fall. Excluding listed places of worship, for which the survey is still incomplete, 1,150 assets have been removed for positive reasons since the Register was launched in 2008. The sites that remain at risk tend to be the more intractable ones where solutions are taking longer to implement.

While the overall number of buildings at risk has fallen, the average conservation deficit for each property has increased from £260k (1999) to £370k (2012). We are also seeing a steady increase in the proportion of buildings that are capable of beneficial re-use – those that have become redundant not because of any fundamental lack of potential, but simply as the temporary victims of the current economic climate.

Despite the lack-lustre state of the national economy, investment and interest in heritage at risk in the West Midlands has continued and we are confident of reaching the target to remove 25% (99) of assets at risk on the 2010 Register by 2015.

The number of assets at risk has altered little in the last year because removals from the Register have been matched by almost as many additions, including 4 buildings, 2 conservation areas and 15 scheduled monuments. However, the largest part of the growth is due to the expansion of our places of worship survey. Almost 12% of West Midland's listed places of worship have now been surveyed and 29 added to the list. The better news is that most of them are already receiving funding from the Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme, so are not expected to remain on the Register for long.

In 2011 we focused our efforts on long-term heritage at risk and non-beneficial assets. Of 20 buildings taken out of risk, half had no beneficial use and 14 had been on the Register since at least 2003.

Last year we identified ten top priority sites, two of which are no longer at risk. Repairs at Richard's Castle, Herefordshire (on the Register since 1998 and of no beneficial use) were funded by Natural England. At Bells Farm, with Birmingham City Council, we funded the repair of the 17th century timber-framed farmhouse for re-use by a community group. Progress made on the other priorities includes securing Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) development support for Ditherington Flax Mill in Shrewsbury, with potential for a further £11.6 million in grant aid. New priorities for 2012 are Snodhill Castle, Herefordshire (at risk since 1998) and the Toll House, Clopton Bridge, Stratford upon Avon (at risk since 2006).

Past experience in the West Midlands shows that partnership and the proactive provision of high levels of support and advice can be as important as grant aid in finding solutions for heritage at risk. Our key partners include local authorities, charitable trusts, Natural England, the HLF and the Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF). Our joint investment in Places of Worship Support Officers (we have five) and in a Heritage at Risk Support Officer working with the AHF is already reaping rewards. At Clopton Bridge, for example, there had been no progress on saving the Toll House until extra resources of time and advice were made available via the AHF post. As a result, the Stratford Society is now bidding for a grant to carry out an options appraisal and to take forward a scheme for repair and re-use.

The importance of support and partnership is recognised in our formation of a dedicated heritage at risk team tasked with maximising the impact of our advice and grants. From now on it will do this by focusing on those projects that promise to take valued heritage assets out of danger as quickly as possible and to the widest public benefit.



**Tim Johnston**  
Planning and Conservation Director,  
West Midlands

## GRAND HOTEL, BIRMINGHAM

One of the city's largest Victorian buildings and a local landmark, the grade II\* Grand Hotel has deteriorated badly since it closed for business in 2000. Encouraged by English Heritage, the City Council and the Victorian Society, the original owners now have ambitious plans for its refurbishment. Late 20th century finishes have already been stripped to reveal the faded but damaged grandeur of the interiors, which will now be conserved within the context of a luxury 21st century hotel. With this and the renovation of the impressive exterior, the hotel will be Grand once more. © English Heritage

## BUILDINGS AT RISK

- Nationally, 3.0% of grade I and II\* listed buildings are at risk. In the West Midlands this rises to 3.7% (102 buildings).
- 20 buildings at risk were removed from the 2011 West Midlands Register, and 4 have been added.

## PLACES OF WORSHIP AT RISK

- Of the 167 listed places of worship surveyed in the West Midlands, 40 are at risk. 29 have been added this year.

## SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

- 3,286 (16.6%) of England's 19,759 scheduled monuments are at risk, of which 229 are in the West Midlands.
- In the West Midlands, 10 scheduled monuments have been removed from the 2011 Register for positive reasons, but 15 have been added.
- 28.8% of scheduled monuments (75) on the West Midlands' baseline 2009 Register have been removed for positive reasons, compared to the national figure of 15.8%.
- Nationally, damage from arable cultivation is the greatest risk factor for scheduled monuments, accounting for 44% of those at risk. In the West Midlands the proportion is 41%.

## REGISTERED PARKS AND GARDENS

- 99 (6.1%) of England's 1,617 registered parks and gardens are at risk, a decrease from 103 (6.4%) in 2011. In the West Midlands, 10 (6.7%) of our 150 sites are at risk.
- Nationally, 5 sites were removed from the 2011 Register and 1 has been added. There has been no change in the West Midlands.

## REGISTERED BATTLEFIELDS

- Of the 43 registered battlefields in England, 6 are at risk, 2 fewer than the 2008 baseline. None of the 6 registered battlefields in the West Midlands are at risk.

## PROTECTED WRECK SITES

- Of the 46 protected wreck sites off England's coast, 4 are at risk. Of the 10 sites on the 2008 baseline, 9 have been removed.

## CONSERVATION AREAS

- We now have information on the condition of 7,976 of England's 9,770 conservation areas; 524 (6.6%) are at risk. Of the 662 conservation areas surveyed in the West Midlands, 57 (8.6%) are at risk.
- 3 conservation areas were removed from the 2011 West Midlands Register for positive reasons, and 2 have been added.



### RICHARD'S CASTLE, HEREFORDSHIRE

As a result of Higher Level Stewardship funding from Natural England the medieval ruins of Richard's Castle are no longer at risk. With guidance from English Heritage, the site's long-standing owners have at last been able to stabilise the masonry, remove damaging vegetation and provide managed access for visitors.

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**55%** OF  
BUILDINGS  
AT RISK ON THE 1999  
REGISTER HAVE BEEN  
**SAVED**

**57**  
CONSERVATION  
AREAS ARE  
AT RISK

**16.1%** OF  
SCHEDULED  
MONUMENTS  
ARE  
AT RISK

OVER  
**£1.5m**  
IN GRANTS  
WAS OFFERED TO  
**39** SITES AT RISK

## PRIORITY HAR SITES

- Former Ditherington Flax Mill (including the attached former malt kiln, Apprentice House, Flax dressing building, and the Stove House and Dye House), Spring Gardens, Ditherington, Shrewsbury, West Midlands
- Grand Hotel, Colmore Row, Birmingham
- Longton Town Centre Conservation Area, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent
- Ludlow town walls, Ludlow, Shropshire
- Middleport Pottery, Middleport, Stoke-on-Trent
- Newman Brothers Coffin Furniture Works, 13-15 Fleet Street, Hockley, Birmingham
- Snailbeach New Smeltnill and Candle House, Snailbeach Lead Mine, Worthen with Shelve, Shropshire
- Snodhill Castle and scheduled area, Snodhill, Peterchurch, Herefordshire
- The Old Rectory, Lower Brailes, Stratford on Avon, Warwickshire
- Toll House, Clopton Bridge, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire

## GRADE II PILOT PROJECTS

English Heritage is looking for people to take part in pilot projects that will explore options for expanding the Heritage at Risk programme to include all grade II listed buildings.

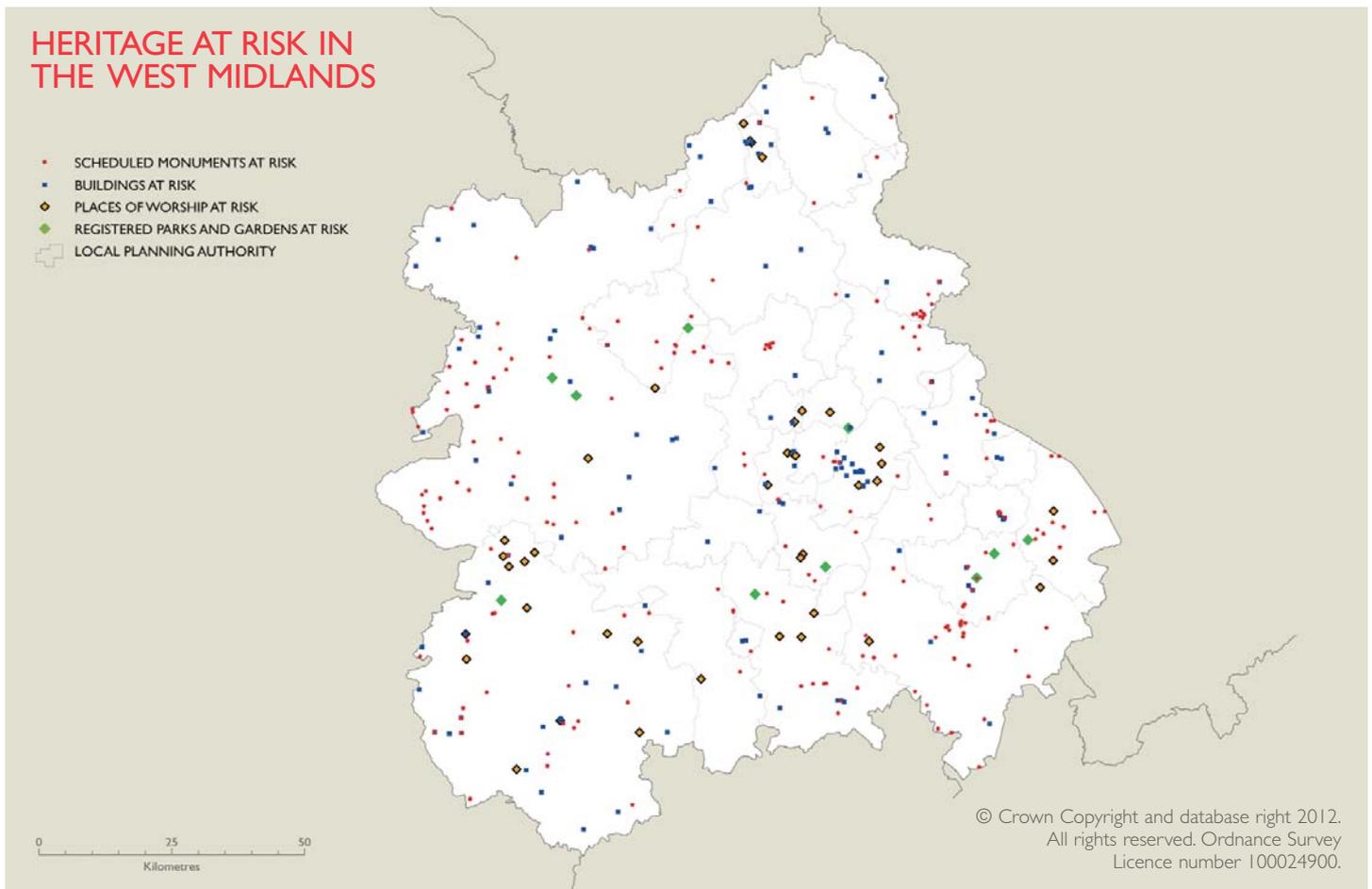
A maximum of 15 pilot projects are required to explore, cost and test various options for undertaking surveys of grade II listed buildings.

For more information and details on how to apply visit:

[www.english-heritage.org.uk/risk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/risk)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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Find out what's at risk by searching or downloading the online Heritage at Risk Register at [www.english-heritage.org.uk/har](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/har)

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