



ENGLISH HERITAGE

***STIRLING CASTLE***  
**GOODWIN SANDS, off KENT**

**CONSERVATION STATEMENT & MANAGEMENT PLAN**

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# STIRLING CASTLE CONSERVATION STATEMENT & MANAGEMENT PLAN

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Stirling Castle* was a pre-Establishment Third Rate Ship of the Line of 70 guns launched in 1699, and wrecked off Kent (on the Goodwin Sands) on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 1703. The site was discovered by sport divers in 1979 and designated under the Protection of Wrecks Act (1973) in 1980. The site was re-designated in 2004 to increase the size of the restricted area.

This Conservation Statement and Management Plan has been produced to enable local and regional stakeholder involvement in our aspirations for the conservation management of the *Stirling Castle* so as to balance protection with economic and social needs. The principle aim of the Plan is to identify a shared vision of how the values and features of the *Stirling Castle* can be conserved, maintained and enhanced.

The following management policies have therefore been formulated in accordance with achieving our principle aim;

### *Policy 1*

*We will continue to support and develop appropriate visitor access to the wreck as a mechanism to develop the instrumental value of the Stirling Castle.*

### *Policy 2*

*Through liaison with our Properties Presentation Team, we will seek to provide interpretative material for the marine historic environment at Deal Castle.*

### *Policy 3*

*Through web-based initiatives, we will continue to develop the accessibility of related material and support appropriate links, as well as do more to enlist effective local support.*

### *Policy 4*

*Mechanisms will be identified and implemented so as to develop shared ownership and partnership working.*

### *Policy 5*

*Key gaps in understanding the significance of the monuments component parts should be identified, prioritised and addressed so that these significances can contribute to informing the future conservation management of the place.*

### *Policy 6*

*We will seek to commission a staged programme of assessment and research to contribute towards a fuller understanding the site in its entirety.*

*Policy 7*

*We will seek to undertake a programme of environmental monitoring and targeted recording.*

*Policy 8*

*Through liaison with the appropriate authorities, we will seek to stabilise and afford preservation in situ to elements at the stern.*

*Policy 9*

*Unnecessary disturbance of the seabed within the restricted area should be avoided wherever possible in order to minimise the risk of damage to buried archaeological remains.*

# **STIRLING CASTLE CONSERVATION STATEMENT & MANAGEMENT PLAN**

## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Background and Purpose**

- 1.1.1 Wreck sites may contain the remains of vessels, their fittings, armaments, cargo and other associated objects or deposits and they may merit legal protection if they contribute significantly to our understanding of our maritime past. The Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 (PWA) allows the UK Government to designate, in territorial waters, an important wreck site to prevent uncontrolled disturbance. Although the National Heritage Act 2002 enabled English Heritage to assist in costs relating to works under the PWA, the responsibilities of English Heritage for the physical management of designated wreck sites must align with our strategic and research priorities.
- 1.1.2 This document seeks to set out a Conservation Statement and Management Plan for *Stirling Castle*, an archaeological site designated under the Protection of Wrecks Act (1973), lying within the Goodwin Sands, off Kent. The site was discovered by sport divers in 1979 and designated under the Protection of Wrecks Act (1973) in 1980.<sup>1</sup> The site was re-designated in 2004 to increase the size of the restricted area.
- 1.1.3 The *Stirling Castle* is attributed the National Monuments Record (NMR) number TR 45 NW 24.
- 1.1.4 English Heritage has published a set of *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* for the sustainable management of the historic environment designed to strengthen our credibility and consistency of decisions taken and advice given. These *Conservation Principles* are intended to support the quality of our decision-making, with the ultimate objective of creating a management regime for all aspects of the historic environment that is clear and transparent in its purpose and sustainable in its application. As such, *Conservation* is taken to be the process of managing change in ways that will best sustain the values of a place in its contexts, and which recognises opportunities to reveal and reinforce those values (English Heritage 2007).
- 1.1.5 This Conservation Statement and Management Plan has therefore been produced to enable local and regional stakeholder involvement in our aspirations for the conservation management of the *Stirling Castle*.

### **1.2 Aims and Objectives**

- 1.2.1 The principle aim of this Conservation Statement and Management Plan is to identify a shared vision of how the values and features of the *Stirling Castle* can be conserved, maintained and enhanced.

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<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that two other vessels of the same class as the *Stirling Castle* are protected on the Goodwin Sands. These are designated as the *Restoration* and *Northumberland* (see Section 3.2.1).

1.2.2 This has been achieved through the following objectives;

- Understanding the *Stirling Castle*
- Assessing the significance of the *Stirling Castle*
- Identifying where the significance of the *Stirling Castle* is vulnerable
- Identifying policies for conserving the significance of the *Stirling Castle*
- Realising the public value of conservation

### **1.3 Scope**

1.3.1 In 1995, the Archaeological Diving Unit sought to determine factors affecting the stability of Protected Wreck sites (report ref. 95/30). This assessment considered the exposure of archaeological material, the probability of active degradation, site dynamics (energy) and sediment covering and concluded that many of the sites designated under the Protection of Wrecks Act (1973) are actively deteriorating.

1.3.2 This assessment was recently reconsidered by English Heritage which sought to place an understanding of the physical stability of (and therefore risk to) each designated wreck site against ongoing investigations (through incumbent licensees), ease of access for visitors and potential for wider awareness (publication, signage etc.). Practical measures that can conserve, maintain and enhance the values and features of the *Stirling Castle* identified as being at risk will be delivered through this Conservation Statement and Management Plan.

1.3.3 There are currently 60 wrecks designated in the UK under the Protection of Wrecks Act (1973). Access to these sites is managed through a licensing scheme and authorisation by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Of the 45 protected sites in England, five lie within the Goodwin Sands.

### **1.4 Authorship**

1.4.1 Prepared by English Heritage, contributions to this draft Conservation Statement and Management Plan are currently being sought through stakeholder involvement. Full acknowledgements of those who contributed to, or were consulted on, its preparation will be presented in the final version.

1.4.2 This document is based on the English Heritage Standard for *Conservation Statements for English Heritage sites* (ref: EHS 0003:2005) and draws on generic management plans for shipwreck sites (e.g. Cederlund 2004).

**1.5 Status**

- 1.5.1 The final version of this report was adopted in November 2007. Notes on its status (in terms of revision) will be maintained.
- 1.5.2 A review of the Plan is scheduled for November 2008.

## **2 Understanding the *Stirling Castle***

### **2.1 Historical Development of the designated Site**

2.1.1 The *Stirling Castle* was a pre-Establishment<sup>2</sup> Third Rate Ship of the Line of 70 guns launched in 1699, and wrecked off Kent (on the Goodwin Sands) on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 1703. The site was discovered by sport divers in 1979 and designated the following year. The site was re-designated in 2004 to increase the size of the restricted area.

2.1.2 Documentary research on the biography of the *Stirling Castle* has previously been published (e.g. Chamberlain 2002 and Endsor 2004) and there is no requirement here to extensively repeat known information other than the following particulars, presented as a *Ship Biography* which draws together the main attributes of the site and provides a statement of the site's archaeological interest;

**Build** The *Stirling Castle* is of high importance as a ship-of-the-line built for Pepys' Restoration Navy and designed to maximise efficiency in battle. As one of only 20 such vessels to be built she is a rare form of construction of major significance for the period in which she was built, representing the birth of the *line of battle* ship. Alterations at Chatham to increase her tonnage in 1699 and a refit in 1701 are of moderate importance. The quality of the remains is better than at similar sites, namely *Restoration* and *Northumberland*, and the range of material on the seabed is of high importance with significant potential for the further study of the *Stirling Castle* and shipbuilding at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Her construction at Deptford under the direction of John Shish adds extra interest to the build of this vessel. She is representative of a national type, constructed at an internationally renowned shipyard and had implications for the construction of vessels within both national and international dimensions.

**Use** The *Stirling Castle* is of high importance as a rare example of a naval vessel employed in key naval campaigns at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Her use as part of the Restoration Navy had far reaching implications for development of the English naval fleet and she was associated with highly significant people, places and events. A substantial artefact assemblage relating to a vessel engaged in battle survives and the wreck has high potential to understand life on board an early 18<sup>th</sup> century warship. The remains may be comparable to those of the *Anne*, a vessel of the Restoration navy preserved in beach deposits in Rye Bay. She is of national interest as a vessel of the Royal navy and was used in international context.

**Loss** The *Stirling Castle* is of high importance with regard to her loss, along with the third rates *Northumberland* and *Restoration* and the fourth rate *Mary* during the Great Storm of 1703. The enormous loss of life and the implications associated with the loss of a British naval vessel are also of high importance. The implications of her loss indicate importance within a national dimension of interest. She is also of interest within a local dimension as a vessel lost on the Goodwin Sands.

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<sup>2</sup> On the 18<sup>th</sup> April 1706, the Admiralty approved the establishment of dimensions for ships of each rate. This establishment was to remain in force for thirteen years (Lavery 1983: 68).

**Survival** The survival of the *Stirling Castle* is of high importance. Substantial surviving structure remains at the site along with a substantial artefact assemblage. The remains are coherent and in excellent condition. The processes affecting survival at the site are comparable to other wrecks on the Goodwin Sands, such as that of *Restoration* and *Northumberland*, and are of moderate importance. However, features of environmental processes within Goodwin Sands are of high importance. The quality of survival and the nature of the evidence suggest high potential for studies of the processes of survival and indicate interest within national and international dimensions. The site is also of interest as a local landmark.

**Investigation** Despite much documentary and archaeological work more material is becoming uncovered as the sand level drops and much work remains to be done. The remains are thus of high importance. The site has significant potential for the development of methodological approaches to the protection of wrecks threatened by natural erosion. She is of interest as a potentially national significant project.

## **2.2 Description of Surviving Features**

2.2.1 The Goodwin Sands consists of approximately 25 metres of fine sand resting on an Upper Chalk platform (British Geological Survey, Thames Estuary Sheet 51°N-00°, 1:250 000 Series). The *Stirling Castle* lies at a charted depth of 12.10m within a shallow gully in an area that had previously been a level plateau of sand near the North Sand Head, Goodwin Knoll. The site consists of fine sand with gravelly sand forming the base of the gully.

2.2.2 As a result of sand wave migration across North Goodwin, the wreck was discovered in 1979 by recreational divers. Archaeological deposits consist of the partially intact hull and internal structure of the *Stirling Castle*, with the bow lying to the west. The gun deck appears to survive, with debris from the upper deck and forecastle and quarterdecks collapsed upon it. The orlop deck is assumed to survive below it and the rudder survives *in situ*. Currently, archaeological material is partially covered by a sand overburden (Wessex Archaeology 2006).

2.2.3 Three principal areas of the monument have been identified, as follows (after Wessex Archaeology 2006a);

Area 1 What is believed to be the bow area of the wreck, and contains what are believed to be the remains of the forward part of the hull, including the forward parts of the upper, gun and orlop decks and hold and possibly part of the collapsed forecastle.

Area 2 What may loosely be described as the midships area and part of the stern area of the site. Surface deposits comprise the upper deck/gun deck, together with quarter deck debris. It is similar in character to Area 1 and a similar depth of stratigraphy may be expected.

Area 3 The stern of the vessel and includes the surviving sternpost, rudder, transom and associated timbers. The outboard side of the stern is scoured to its full surviving height except on the starboard quarter. This area appears to be highly unstable.



## **2.3 History of the Site**

- 2.3.1 In 1979, the wreck was dramatically reported to have been 'littered with human bones, organic artefacts, rope, intact gun carriages and much else. Divers looking down through hatches [saw] intact barrels stowed in tiers, and one claims to have seen a skeleton still clothed in a leather jacket' (Lyon 1980). It was also noted that the hull, deprived of the protection and the support of the sands, was deteriorating and priority for recovery was given to smaller and lighter artefacts which were in danger of being swept away by tidal movement.
- 2.3.2 Sand encroachment over the site in 1986 (ADU Report 003/1986) prevented additional investigation and further sediment accumulation continued until 1998.
- 2.3.3 Sand-wave migration in the northern area of the Goodwins is evidenced by a sandbank on the starboard side of the wreck that appeared to have moved to the northeast by c.200 metres between 1999 and 2000 (Peacock 2000a) causing a significant reduction in seabed levels over the whole site, particularly at the port quarter. This area of the hull and the stern has been subject to very significant scouring which has further removed sand that was supporting the outboard side of the hull, with the result that the port quarter and part of the stern have collapsed outwards. The site is therefore unstable and the structure of the vessel has been gradually collapsing over a number of years.
- 2.3.4 However, a comparison of multibeam data collected by the University of St Andrews in April 2005 and an earlier 2002 ADU dataset indicated that several metres of sediment had accreted in places around the stern and to the north east of the wreck since 2002, although substantial scour was identified in other areas (Bates *et al*, 2005). Further multibeam survey in 2006 confirmed that there had been no significant changes in sedimentation around the wreck, except for some accumulation near the stern. However, the monuments' stern-post and one of the attached transom cross-timbers was noted to have fallen further astern (Dean 2006).
- 2.3.5 A substantial amount material was recovered from the wreck throughout 1979 and 1980, with noteworthy artefacts comprising a bronze (Rupertino) gun and other armaments, a copper galley kettle, navigational instruments (including a significant wooden cross-staff) and possibly a bell (dated 1701), while evidence that led to the identity of the wreck was provided by the recovery of various items bearing the initials of the Captain and First Lieutenant of the *Stirling Castle*. However, Lyon has argued that as the *Stirling Castle* was launched in 1699, the bell noted above is more likely to have been recovered from either the *Northumberland* or *Restoration*, which were both launched in 1702 (Lyon 1980). In addition, Michael Hunt (Curator Ramsgate Maritime Museum) believes that the copper galley kettle on display in Ramsgate is from the *Northumberland* and not the *Stirling Castle* (Michael Hunt, pers. comm.).

2.3.6 Recovery of material appears to have been less intensive from 1980/1 as the wreck was noted to be disappearing beneath encroaching sand. In all, the collection from the *Stirling Castle* at the Ramsgate Maritime Museum comprises 305 artefacts raised between 1979 and 2002, including a complete gun carriage with cannon and truck wheels attached. This gun and carriage is currently undergoing conservation in Ramsgate, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Additional material has been accessioned by the National Maritime Museum and some artefacts remain in storage by the Isle of Thanet Archaeological Society.

## **2.4 Ownership, Management and Current Use**

2.4.1 The *Stirling Castle* was purchased outright by the Isle of Thanet Archaeological Unit (now the Isle of Thanet Archaeological Society) in 1980 from the Ministry of Defence. Items of personal property remaining within the wreck appear to have been purchased by 1982 (Isle of Thanet Archaeological Society archive). In 1982, the Society sold 64 shares in the *Stirling Castle* as a fundraising event. The seabed within the restricted area and around the Goodwin Sands is owned by the Crown.

2.4.2 The *Stirling Castle* is an emotive subject at local level within the maritime heritage community at Ramsgate and forms one of four current Protected Wreck sites on the Goodwin Sands. In addition, the site gained national interest in 2003 when the *Stirling Castle* was featured in an episode of Channel 4's *Wreck Detectives*.

2.4.3 Although physical access to the designated site is restricted to licensed divers, the material archive is dispersed between four principal collections; material in private ownership, the collection held by the Trust for Thanet Archaeology, the collection in Ramsgate's Maritime Museum and a collection in the National Maritime Museum.

2.4.4 In terms of access to the material and its presentation, the Goodwins Gallery and 'Gun Room' at the Ramsgate Maritime Museum provides the only opportunity for interpretation, though a DCMS Information Board (addressing all four Protected Wreck sites in the vicinity) is sited towards the northern quarter of Ramsgate Harbour.

2.4.5 The nearest English Heritage Property to the *Stirling Castle* is Deal Castle, which overlooks the Goodwin Sands, there is currently no provision for interpretative material there. In addition, there is no interpretative material available for divers wishing to visit the site on the seabed.

2.4.6 A popular account entitled *The Goodwin Sands Man-of-War* was privately published by David Chamberlain in 2002 and was preceded by small articles published in the *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* and *Archaeologia Cantiana*. Other than an archaeological summary by Fenwick & Gale (1998) and digital dissemination of recent survey work, no comprehensive work on the *Stirling Castle* has been published, except for popular accounts (see, for example, Peacock 2000b).

- 2.4.7 Although the site is managed by English Heritage and was assessed by the Contractor for Archaeological Services in Relation to the Protection of Wrecks Act (1973) in 2006, on-going survey and monitoring work is largely undertaken through licensed activity by local community members, with archaeological advice provided by a Nominated Archaeologist and other specialists as required. There has been considerable local investment in the site in recent years through licensed activity; ten licences, including amendments, have been issued for the *Stirling Castle* between May 2003 and December 2006, reflecting sustained interest in the site.
- 2.4.8 However, as with all submerged wreck sites, physical access to the *Stirling Castle* can only be undertaken by divers, although it is conceded that Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROV's) may enable greater access in the future.

## **2.5 Gaps in Existing Knowledge**

- 2.5.1 While not comprehensively published, records to establish the build, use and loss of the *Stirling Castle* have been identified, and include records held in the National Archives, Kew. This material includes Ships' Pay Books (ADM 33/230), Logs (ADM 51/4355 & 52/291) and Muster Lists (ADM 36/3605 & 3606) although further research into the ships' 1701 re-build is required. Therefore, the weakest part of the ship-biography is in investigation and the archaeological synthesis of work undertaken since discovery in 1979.
- 2.5.2 The desk-based assessment of the *Stirling Castle* undertaken in 2003 summarised the archaeological history of the site and noted that an evaluation of artefacts recovered should be undertaken (see Appendix I).
- 2.5.3 As such, a formal programme of staged assessment and research is required to contribute towards a fuller understanding the site in its entirety.

### 3 Assessment of Significance

#### 3.1 Basis for Assessment of Significance

3.1.1 *Significance* means *the sum of the cultural and natural heritage values of a place* (English Heritage 2007). Cultural heritage value has many aspects, including the potential of a place to yield primary information about past human activity (evidential value, which includes archaeological value), the ways in which it can provide direct links to past people, events and aspects of life (historical value), the ways in which people respond to a place through sensory and intellectual experience of it (aesthetic value, which includes architectural value) and the meanings of a place for the people who identify with it, and communities for whom it is part of their collective memory (communal value).

3.1.2 In addition, the historic environment is a cultural and natural heritage resource shared by communities characterised not just by geographical location but also by common interests and values. As such, emphasis may be placed upon important consequential (technically, ‘instrumental’) benefits or potential, for example as an educational, recreational, or economic resource, which the historic environment provides. The seamless cultural and natural strands of the historic environment are a vital part of everyone’s heritage, held in stewardship for the benefit of future generations.

3.1.3 The basis for assessing significance therefore enables consideration of the varying degrees of significance of different elements of the site. By identifying those elements which are vital to its significance and so must not be lost or compromised, we are able to identify elements which are of lesser value, and elements which have little value or detract from the significance of the site.

#### 3.2 Statement of Significance

3.2.1 The *Stirling Castle* was one of sixteen Third Rates of 70 guns rebuilt between 1697 and 1706. It is worth noting the fate and status of the fifteen other vessels of this rebuilding programme;<sup>3</sup>

Name	Launched	End	Designation	Notes
<i>Resolution</i>	1698	Foundered 1703	Designated 2006	Identity not confirmed
<i>Burford</i>	1699	Wrecked 1719	-	
<i>Eagle</i>	1699	Wrecked 1707	Designated 1975	Identity not confirmed
<i>Expedition</i>	1699	Rebuilt 1714	-	
<i>Kent</i>	1699	Rebuilt 1724	-	
<i>Suffolk</i>	1699	Rebuilt 1718	-	
<i>Berwick</i>	1700	Broken up 1723	-	
<i>Edgar</i>	1700	Rebuilt 1709	-	
<i>Essex</i>	1700	Rebuilt 1713	-	
<i>Grafton</i>	1700	Captured 1707	-	
<i>Hampton Court</i>	1701	Captured 1707	-	
<i>Lennox</i>	1701	Rebuilt 1723	-	

<sup>3</sup> After Lavery 1983, page 166

<i>Northumberland</i>	1702	Wrecked 1703	Designated 1981	Identity not confirmed
<i>Restoration</i>	1702	Wrecked 1703	Designated 1981	Identity not confirmed
<i>Elizabeth</i>	1704	Captured 1704	-	

- 3.2.2 Representing the only identified Third Rate of 70 guns in the archaeological record, the aesthetic value of the *Stirling Castle* as a warship is therefore closely tied to its evidential value on the seabed in terms of its historical context and technological development. Pepys' shipbuilding programme of 1677, for example, was affected by the supply of timber for the English Civil War, the Great Fire of London and the general expansion of the navy had taken its toll on the availability of suitable wood. Construction of the *Thirty Ships* was delayed and compromises were made because of a lack of large timber elements (Lavery 1983: 49). For the frames of the new warships, one solution was to mortise a triangular shaped wooden chock (butt-chock) into particular futtocks. The use of frame butt-chocks in the construction of the *Stirling Castle* was recorded in 1999 (DSM log, 5<sup>th</sup> July 1999, Seadive archive) and represents rare evidence of the methods employed to counter the inadequate supply of suitable grown timber, despite her rebuild in 1699.
- 3.2.3 Additionally, the recovery of a wooden fixed block from the wreck in 2002 may provide evidence on the introduction of the ship's steering wheel (Endsor 2004) and could also be related to the rebuild of the *Stirling Castle* in 1701. The date of its introduction of the steering wheel has been the subject of some debate and the block, into which is set a pair of angled sheaves, may have formed a component of the steering rope mechanism connected to the tiller. Endsor (2004) argues that the *Stirling Castle* may have been fitted with both a steering wheel and the earlier whipstaff. If so, then the *Stirling Castle* provides archaeological evidence for this important transition in steering mechanisms for warships.
- 3.2.4 Although further historical information may be derived from continued archaeological investigation and assessment, the monument's instrumental and historical value can be related to its participation in the War of Spanish Succession (1701-13) and subsequent loss during the *Great Storm* of 1703 (see Brayne 2003) as well as its association with Pepys and the development of the *line of battle* fleet.
- 3.2.5 Members of the local community maintain a keen interest in the site and may be viewed as unofficial 'custodians'; some members of the community have even published personal accounts of research and investigation (e.g. Chamberlain 2002), while wider instrumental and community value can be discerned through principles of integrated management and stakeholder involvement. In 1983 for example, the East Kent Maritime Trust (EKMT) was formed as a Registered Charity following an initiative of Thanet District Council. The Trust aims to raise awareness of the 'unparalleled maritime and associated heritage of East Kent' through local museums and a wide range of educational activities including support for the Goodwins Joint Action Group (G/JAG). This Group seeks to operate a coordinated management model to deal with local maritime heritage interests associated with the Goodwins

through activities and heritage champions. The Group also seeks to raise awareness of the local maritime heritage value through membership, including representatives of county and district local authorities, archaeological contractors, divers, boatmen's associations and English Heritage.

- 3.2.6 In addition, the adjacent East Kent Coast Maritime Natural Area is similarly valued for named chalk marine cave and reef habitats are of international importance while the *Stirling Castle* may also be seen to provide an instrumental recreational (and therefore economic) resource by virtue of 'diving tourism' while (local) educational value may be viewed in relation to interpretative material available in Ramsgate.
- 3.2.7 Whereas historical, communal and instrumental values contribute to the assessment of significance of the *Stirling Castle*, these values cannot stand-alone. Without continued and sustained aesthetic and potential future evidential value, interest in the *Stirling Castle* would be diminished. As such, extant material remains on the seabed are vital to the significance of the site and must therefore not be lost or compromised.
- 3.2.8 The following table seeks to summarise these values of the *Stirling Castle* as a whole, by noting how those values relate to the surviving fabric and its constituent parts;

<b>Aesthetic</b>	Relating to the ways in which people respond to the <i>Stirling Castle</i> through sensory and intellectual experience of it, the wrecks' strength lies in it being a warship of the pre-establishment Restoration Navy. She was one of Pepys' Thirty Ships of 1677, forming the first great shipbuilding programme, and one of the sixteen Third Rates to have been rebuilt between 1697 and 1704.
<b>Communal</b>	Relating to the meanings of the <i>Stirling Castle</i> for the people who identify with it, and whose collective memory it holds, places and community members have a long history of association with the wreck from the Deal and Ramsgate boatmen rescuing survivors to more recent investigation and survey and the accession of material by Ramsgate's maritime museum.
<b>Evidential</b>	Relating to the potential of the <i>Stirling Castle</i> to yield primary information about past human activity, limited evaluation, excavation and chance recovery has indicated survival of substantial elements of hull structure, fittings, armaments and other associated objects or deposits.
<b>Historical</b>	Relating to the ways in which the <i>Stirling Castle</i> can provide direct links to past people, events and aspects of life, the wreck is identified with famous personalities and military campaigns. Documentary evidence allows for an understanding of the wrecking event while archaeological material recovered from the site provides insights into shipboard life.
<b>Instrumental</b>	Economic, educational, recreational and other benefits which exist as a consequence of the cultural or natural heritage values of the <i>Stirling Castle</i> may be identified in its value as a visited dive site of historic interest, museum display and its co-location with other Protected Wreck Sites within the Goodwin Sands.

### **3.3 Gaps in Understanding Significance**

- 3.3.1 Despite the acknowledged need for a formal programme of staged assessment and research, the assessment of significance has not been acutely hindered by any gaps in knowledge identified in Section 2.4 above. However, certain key gaps in our understanding of the significance of the component parts of the site may need to be filled so these significances can contribute to informing its future conservation management. Most notable among these gaps would be the documentary identification of material recovered from the site (contributing to our understanding of the evidential value of remaining components) and a comprehensive understanding and recognition of the community value of the *Stirling Castle* within the wider character of the Goodwin Sands.

### **3.4 Statutory and Other Designations**

- 3.4.1 In June 1980, a 50m area surrounding the wreck had been protected (SI 1980/645) though this was later amended to effect a more accurate position (SI 1980/1306). Further designation in 2004 expanded the restricted area to 300m.
- 3.4.2 Statutory Instrument 2004/2393 therefore affords protection to a circular area of seabed (radius 300m) around position 51° 16.4561N 01° 30.4121E (WGS84) under the Protection of Wrecks Act (1973). This restricted area relates specifically to the *Stirling Castle*.
- 3.4.3 The Goodwin Sands lies within the East Kent Coast Maritime Natural Area. The concept of Natural Areas was a response by English Nature to the EU Convention on Biological Diversity signed by the UK Government in 1992. They are intended to provide a framework for an integrated approach to nature conservation and are defined in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan as 'biogeographic zones which reflect the geological foundation, the natural systems and processes and the wildlife in different parts of England, and provide a framework for setting objectives for nature conservation'.
- 3.4.4 In addition, Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) places a duty on all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity. Guidance for this duty is due to be published in early 2007.

## **4 Issues and Vulnerability**

### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 This section summarises the main conservation and management issues that specifically affect, or may affect, the significance of the wreck site and its component parts and elements. The ways in which the significance of the site may be vulnerable will also be identified.

4.1.2 Vulnerability (and therefore risk) may be assessed against environmental factors (such as natural processes) and human impacts on the site, including the setting. Commissioned research is being undertaken to assess site specific marine environments to provide a better understanding of the level of risk to assets or whether a site is in a stable condition. Current assessment may indicate that such sites are at medium or high risk, unless they are completely buried below bed level during successive tidal cycles.

4.1.3 It is accepted that all wreck sites are vulnerable simply because of the nature of their environment, though sites will be considered to be at risk when there is a threat of damage, decay or loss of the monument. However, damage, deterioration or loss of the monument through natural or other impacts will not necessarily be considered to put the monument at risk if there is a programme of positive management. Practical measures that affect site stability, preservation *in situ* and increased visitor access will be addressed here, while the necessity to address the site's post-excavation back-log is recognised (see also section 4.7).

4.1.4 Issues relate specifically to the values identified in Section 3.2 above and are presented here thematically rather than in order of severity or priority for remedial action. Relevant issues cover a wide range, including - but not restricted to;

- The physical condition of the site and its setting;
- Conservation and presentation philosophy;
- Visitor and other legal/ownership requirements;
- The existence (or lack) of appropriate uses;
- Resources, including financial constraints and availability of skills;
- Lack of information or understanding about aspects of the site, and;
- Conflicts between different types of significance.

### **4.2 The Physical Condition of the Site and its Setting**

4.2.1 It is known that despite a clockwise tidal trend, the Goodwin Sands change morphology on a seasonal and anticlockwise rotational basis (Cloet 1954: 204) and that aerial photography has revealed that North Sand Head may be the pivot for the rotation (Larn & Larn 1995). Exposure of the *Stirling Castle* in 1979, and again in 1998, is associated with the rotation of the Sands (though it is possible that sand aggregate extraction for infill during the recent redevelopment of Dover Harbour is relevant to the sedimentary dynamics).



- 4.2.2 The condition of the ship's structure and artefacts has been excellent due to burial in an anaerobic environment under mobile sand though significant changes in the depth of burial, degree of exposure and artefact condition have been observed throughout the site since its discovery. As a response to quantify this natural change, English Heritage commissioned the University of St Andrews, supported by the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, to undertake a study to optimise the potential of geophysical remote survey equipment for the rapid, detailed investigation of submerged archaeological sites and their immediate surroundings. The *Stirling Castle* formed a test site for the study (see Bates *et al* 2005).
- 4.2.3 Analysis of the changes in sediment profile around the monument indicated that there had been a general accretion of sediment between 2002 and 2006, although part of the wreck mound appeared to have subsided into a scour pit to the east of the site ([www.st-andrews.ac.uk/rasse/index.html](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/rasse/index.html)). The structural cohesion of the surviving hull has therefore been lost in places, with the result that at least part of the port side has been observed by the Licensee to have collapsed outwards, with resultant slumping of deck(s) and a loss of archaeological deposits from within (Wessex Archaeology 2006).
- 4.2.4 Based on the observed increase in sediment height, and assuming a continuation of the observed accretion process, the rate of accretion will not be sufficiently great as to completely bury the wreck site, and so protect it, in the next decade ([www.st-andrews.ac.uk/rasse/index.html](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/rasse/index.html)).

### **4.3 Conservation and Presentation Philosophy**

- 4.3.1 Although a detailed site plan is yet to be published and no comprehensive account of quantifiable changes in condition has been undertaken, it is clear that the site is highly unstable.
- 4.3.2 It is therefore acknowledged that there has been a serious deterioration in the overall condition of the monument and long-term survival of the ship and its contents can only be achieved by reburial or by recovery and conservation. The site is extremely vulnerable to destruction and the processes of sand movement around the wreck are not understood. The continuing exposure of the wreck means that much of the site and its contents could be lost within a few years.
- 4.3.3 Despite evidential and aesthetic value of the *Stirling Castle* being of vital significance to the site, *in situ* management of the entire hull may no longer be appropriate. Rather, selective *stabilisation* ought to be considered as a management option for the site.
- 4.3.4 As noted in Section 2.3 above, Deal Castle is the nearest English Heritage Property to the *Stirling Castle* which also overlooks four other Protected Wreck sites on the Goodwin Sands. There is obvious opportunity to provide interpretative material and appropriate signage for the wider marine historic environment within the Castle.

#### **4.4 Visitor and Access Management**

- 4.4.1 Although we have no current plans to develop underwater interpretative materials, we do encourage and support responsible visitor access through the licensing system – though we do recognise that extensive visits may not be without some level of damage to the site. Information packs are provided to licensed visitors which note the requirement for liaison with principal licensees.
- 4.4.2 Applications for visitor access will be carefully considered, in consultation with the Licensee, and will be subject to specific conditions.
- 4.4.3 The number of recent visiting (named) divers to the monument can be summarised as follows;

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Named Divers</b>
2003	10
2004	22
2005	16
2006	27

- 4.4.4 In addition, ‘virtual access’ has been enabled through the online game and will be further enabled by current web-based initiatives. It is recognised that interest in the site stimulated through electronic access will be limited by the lack of formal archaeological publication.

#### **4.5 The Existence (or lack) of Appropriate Uses**

- 4.5.1 Although un-licensed activity on the site has been reported in the past, recent local self-regulation has served to ensure that illegal diving on the site has been significantly reduced (if not completely removed).

#### **4.6 Resources, including Financial Constraints and availability of Skills**

- 4.6.1 There is no doubt that the recovery of archaeological material to date indicates the evidential value of the *Stirling Castle* and that interaction with archaeological material relates to both aesthetic and historical value. However, given the limited local capacity for professional conservation of material recovered from the site and English Heritage’s research priorities, there shall be a presumption against further excavation and recovery.
- 4.6.2 In line with Government policy for marine archaeology, we will develop provision for flexible voluntary management agreements for sites underwater. This will enable greater partnership, better planning, a reduction in individual license applications and a more holistic approach to the needs of the *Stirling Castle*.
- 4.6.4 In accordance with the Diving at Work Regulations 1997, archaeological interventions underwater commissioned by English Heritage can only be undertaken by a registered Diving Contractor, and then only by such a Contractor with appropriate archaeological experience. It is therefore acknowledged that this may restrict the implementation of some of our conservation policies.

**4.7 Lack of Information or Understanding about aspects of the Site**

4.7.1 *Taking to the Water* (English Heritage's Initial Policy for the Management of Maritime Archaeology in England) addressed the protected wreck site post-excavation backlog. Here, it is recognised that over the last twenty-five years many licenses have been issued for survey and excavation work within areas designated under the *Protection of Wrecks Act*. Few of the licenses issued required the academic reporting of fieldwork results and, as the vast majority of this work took place on a voluntary basis, lacking adequate financial support for subsequent analysis and dissemination of the results, very little of this work has been formally published.

4.7.2 Inevitably, the standard of such work on the *Stirling Castle* is variable and in different formats. Some of the projects were carried out to an extremely high standard and have resulted in accessible archives, while others have resulted in less coherent records. The data from this work represents the only record of investigations and, therefore, is itself an irreplaceable resource.

**4.8 Conflicts between different types of Significance.**

4.8.1 There is no doubt that the recovery of over 300 artefacts and *in situ* hull structure and deposits indicates the evidential value of the *Stirling Castle* while interaction with archaeological material relates to both aesthetic and historical value. However, given the limited local capacity for professional conservation of material recovered from the site and English Heritage's research priorities, there shall be a general presumption against further intrusive investigation.

## **5 Conservation Management Policies**

### **5.1 Introduction**

5.1.1 This section of the Conservation Statement and Management Plan builds on the Assessment of Significance and the issues identified in Issues and Vulnerability to develop conservation policies which will retain or reveal the site's significance, and which provide a framework for decision-making in the future management and development of the site or reveal the site's significance and also:

- Meet statutory requirements;
- Comply with English Heritage's standards and guidance.

5.1.2 It is intended that the policies will create a framework for managing change on the *Stirling Castle* that is clear in purpose, and transparent and sustainable in its application. Our aim is to achieve implementation through the principles of shared ownership and partnership working so as to balance protection with economic and social needs.

5.1.3 Policies are also compatible with, and reflect, English Heritage's *Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* and its published policies and guidelines, as well as the wider statutory framework.

### **5.2 The *Stirling Castle* is a Shared Resource**

5.2.1 The *Stirling Castle* forms a unique record of past human activity which reflects the aspirations, ingenuity and investment of resources of previous generations. In addition, it is an economic asset, and provides a resource for education and enjoyment.

5.2.2 In addition, the conflict between the desire for access to the site and the restrictions imposed by conservation needs and legislative limitations will be reconciled through continued visitor management.

5.2.3 Therefore, we should sustain and shape the *Stirling Castle* in ways that allow people to enjoy and benefit from it, but which do not compromise the ability of future generations to do the same.

*Management Policy 1 We will continue to support and develop appropriate visitor access to the wreck as a mechanism to develop the instrumental value of the Stirling Castle.*

### **5.3 Everyone can participate in sustaining the *Stirling Castle***

5.4.1 Stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute to understanding and managing the *Stirling Castle*. Judgements about its values and decisions

about its future will be made in ways that are accessible, inclusive and transparent.

- 5.4.2 Practitioners should use their knowledge, skills and experience to encourage others to understand, value and care for their heritage. They play a crucial role in communicating and sustaining the established values of the monument, and in helping people to articulate the values they attach to it.
- 5.4.3 Education at all stages should help to raise awareness and understanding of such values, including the varied ways in which these values are perceived by different generations and communities. It should also help people to develop, maintain and pass on their knowledge and skills.
- 5.2.4 In acknowledging the communal value of the *Stirling Castle*, recent local self-regulation has served to ensure that unauthorised activity on the site has been significantly reduced (if not completely removed). Building on this success, we will develop provision for a flexible voluntary management agreement for the Colossus. This will enable greater partnership, better planning, a reduction in individual license applications and a more holistic approach to the needs of the *Stirling Castle*.

*Management Policy 2 Through liaison with our Properties Presentation Team, we will seek to provide interpretative material for the marine historic environment at Deal Castle.*

*Management Policy 3 Through web-based initiatives, we will continue to develop the accessibility of related material and support appropriate links, as well as do more to enlist effective local support.*

*Management Policy 4 Mechanisms will be identified and implemented so as to develop shared ownership and partnership working.*

#### **5.4 Understanding the Values of the *Stirling Castle* is vital**

- 5.5.1 The significance of the *Stirling Castle* embraces all the interdependent cultural and natural heritage values that are associated with it. To identify and appreciate those values, it is essential first to understand the structure and ecology of the place, how and why that has changed over time, and its present character.
- 5.5.2 Judgements about values are necessarily specific to the time they are made. As understanding develops, and as people's perceptions evolve and places change, so assessments of significance will alter, and tend to grow more complex.
- 5.5.3 We acknowledge that records of previous activities on the *Stirling Castle* form an irreplaceable resource to identify previous values and assist with maintaining a cumulative account of what has happened to the site, and understanding how its significance may have been altered.

5.5.4 Further, a formal programme of staged assessment and research is required, to contribute towards a fuller understanding the site in its entirety. Such work will conform to the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (English Heritage 2006) and is likely to comprise the following stages;

- Collation of the site archive;
- Assessment to determine academic potential of the archive;
- Determination of further work to fulfil this academic potential;
- Preparation of a research archive;
- Report text for publication, and finally;
- Publication.

*Management Policy 5* Key gaps in understanding the significance of the monuments component parts should be identified, prioritised and addressed so that these significances can contribute to informing the future conservation management of the place.

*Management Policy 6* We will seek to commission a staged programme of assessment and research to contribute towards a fuller understanding the site in its entirety.

## **5.5 The Stirling Castle will be managed to sustain its Values**

5.6.1 Conservation is the process of managing change in ways that will best sustain the values of a place in its contexts, and which recognises opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values.

5.6.3 Changes in the *Stirling Castle* underwater are inevitable and it is acknowledged that all wreck sites are vulnerable simply because of the nature of their environment. As a response to quantify natural change, we have developed a project to model sediment erosion across the Goodwin Sands (see Section 6.2). However, measures taken to counter the effects of natural change will be proportionate to the identified risks and sustainable in the long term.

5.6.4 In addition, the 2006 Management Report for the *Stirling Castle* (Wessex Archaeology 2006c) defined a range of measures designed to sustain heritage values, where these values represent a public interest in the *Stirling Castle*. We will build on the recommendations set out in the report where it is both necessary and justified to use law and public policy to regulate the management of the *Stirling Castle* as a place of established heritage value.

5.6.5 Other changes will be devised so as to avoid material harm. Irreversible intervention on the *Stirling Castle* may nonetheless be justified if it provides new information about the past, reveals or reinforces the values of a place or helps sustain those values for future generations – so long as the impact is demonstrably proportionate to the predicted benefits. The effects of changes

to the condition of the *Stirling Castle* will be monitored and evaluated, and the results used to inform subsequent action.

- 5.6.7 If retaining any significant part of the *Stirling Castle* is not reasonably practicable, its potential to inform us about the past will be exploited. This involves the recovery of information through prior investigation, followed by analysis, archiving and dissemination of the results at a standard appropriate to its significance.
- 5.6.8 Where loss to the site is deliberate, the costs of this work should normally be borne by those who initiate the change.

*Management Policy 7* We will seek to undertake a programme of environmental monitoring and targeted recording.

*Management Policy 8* Through liaison with the appropriate authorities, we will seek to stabilise and afford preservation in situ to elements at the stern.

*Management Policy 9* Unnecessary disturbance of the seabed within the restricted area should be avoided wherever possible in order to minimise the risk of damage to buried archaeological remains.

## **6 Forward Plan**

### **6.1 Introduction**

6.1.1 In order to commence the implementation of the proposed Management Policies outlined in Section 5, English Heritage is seeking to support a range of projects that will increase our understanding of the value and setting of the *Stirling Castle*. These projects are outlined below.

### **6.2 Proposed Projects in relation to the *Stirling Castle***

6.2.1 *Managing Cultural Heritage Underwater (MACHU)*. Developed with the support of the Culture 2000 Programme of the European Union, the primary goal of this project is to make information about our common underwater cultural heritage accessible for academic purposes, policy makers and for the general public. English Heritage has selected the Goodwin Sands as an area to test sediment-erosion modelling and we intend to study the sedimentation around the *Stirling Castle* in particular. Further information on the MACHU project is available from [www.machuproject.eu](http://www.machuproject.eu).

6.2.2 *(Material) Archive Appraisal and Assessment*. Funded through English Heritage's Designated Wrecks Programme, this project seeks to identify and quantify the existing (material) archive assemblage relating to the *Stirling Castle* which is likely to lead to assessment, analysis and publication stages. The assessment and selection of artefactual and environmental material for further study will inform us of the social and environmental conditions found on board this particular vessel. This area is also of interest in terms of understanding and promoting the value of the assemblage recovered from the site before 2002 to a wider audience.

6.2.3 *Continued Field Assessment*. Undertaken through the contract for Archaeological Services in relation to the Protection of Wrecks Act (1973), the detailed non-intrusive survey that commenced in 2006 will be completed. Continued survey will be pursued using the same methodology as adopted for the 2006 contractor fieldwork, combining the ground-truthing of upstanding anomalies identified in the multibeam datasets, simple offset baseline drawings and the addition of data from previous diver surveys. Some elevation recording may also be undertaken.

6.2.4 *Remedial Stabilisation / Recovery*. In 2007, the Archaeological Contractor will be required to assess the stern of the *Stirling Castle* for either remedial stabilisation or recovery. This work will be undertaken through the contract for Archaeological Services in relation to the Protection of Wrecks Act (1973).

6.2.5 *Accessibility: presentation*. Working in conjunction with colleagues in our Properties Presentation team, we will seek to provide interpretative material at Deal Castle for the 'Great Storm' wrecks.



6.2.6 The proposed timescale for the implementation of these projects is summarised in the following table:

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Project Summary</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
MACHU	Wide area sediment / erosion modelling	2006-2009
Designated Wrecks Programme	Archive appraisal / assessment	2007-2008
Archaeological Contract Programme	Detailed assessment	2007-2008
Designated Wrecks Programme	Determine action for remedial stabilisation / recovery	2007-2008
Accessibility: presentation	Provision for interpretative material at Deal Castle	2008?

## **7 Implementation**

### **7.1 Consultation**

7.1.1 An agreed draft *Conservation and Management Plan* for Protected Wreck Sites has been submitted to the Advisory Committee on Historic Wreck Sites (ACHWS) for their consideration. The document has also been internally reviewed by English Heritage.

7.1.2 The *Conservation and Management Plan* for the *Stirling Castle* shall be circulated for a four-week stakeholder consultation to refine how the values and features of the site can be conserved, maintained and enhanced. Responses to the consultation will be considered and the *Plan* revised as appropriate. Only one response was received to the consultation.

### **7.2 Adoption of Policies**

7.2.1 The *Plan* was adopted in November 2007.

7.2.2 A programme that identifies a realistic timescale for implementing the *Plan*, taking into account those areas which need immediate action, those which can be implemented in the medium or long term, and those which are ongoing will be devised.

7.2.3 Responsibilities for implementation lie with English Heritage (led by the Maritime Archaeology Team), though consultation with stakeholders will be maintained throughout. In addition, provision will be made for periodic review and updating the *Plan*.

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## ***Stirling Castle: Conservation Statement & Management Plan***

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## **9 Authorship and Consultation:**

- 9.1 This Conservation Statement & Management Plan for *Stirling Castle* has been prepared by:

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English Heritage, South-East Region  
Goodwins Joint Action Group  
Hampshire & Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology  
Isle of Thanet Archaeological Society  
Kent and Essex Sea Fisheries Committee  
Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Group  
Ministry of Defence  
Natural England  
Nautical Archaeology Society  
Trust for Thanet Archaeology

**Appendix I: Recommendations of 2003 Desk-based Assessment**

**Recommendation**

The Protected Area is expanded from 50 to 300 metres.

Licensed survey work on site continues.

Future management with Isle of Thanet Archaeological Society should be discussed.

An evaluation of artefacts recovered to date should be undertaken.

Further field evaluation should be undertaken.

Consideration is given to the placing of a marker buoy.

Historic and published cartography be collated.

Missing archive components should be obtained.

Identify scope for enhancing public understanding and appreciation of the wreck.

Publication of licensed work.

**Progress**

Completed 2004

Enabled through DCMS Licence

Subject to continuing discussions

Subject to 2007 HEEP  
Commission

Continued survey planned for  
2007

Not required

Not undertaken

Subject to 2007 HEEP  
Commission

Completed by EH 2007

Subject to 2007 HEEP  
Commission & Licensee

## **Appendix II: Recommendations from 2006 Designated Site Assessment**

### **Recommendation**

Further Surface Recovery	Further surface recovery of vulnerable artefacts from this site should continue.
Non-Intrusive Survey	The site urgently requires the completion of a detailed non-intrusive survey. It is recommended that this should be pursued using the same methodology as adopted for the 2006 contractor fieldwork, combining the ground-truthing of upstanding anomalies identified in the multibeam datasets, simple offset baseline drawings and the addition of data from previous diver surveys. Some elevation recording may also be necessary.
Excavation	Assuming that a comprehensive programme of site stabilisation is not anticipated, then consideration should be given to the possibility of limited excavation of areas of the site currently subject to erosion and/or collapse.
Assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) The full recording of finds recovered from the site;</li><li>2) Comparative cartographic study;</li><li>3) Assessment of Seadive video and photographic material;</li><li>4) Assessment of ADU, ACHWS and DCMS archives;</li><li>5) Location and assessment of archives relating to work carried out on the site between 1979 and 1998;</li><li>6) Examination of documentary records located by RDF Media;</li><li>7) Assessment of the theory advanced by the Licensee that the hydrodynamic regime of the site has been changed by the presence of three large 20th century wrecks.</li></ol>
Publication	A considerable amount of documentary research and fieldwork has been undertaken on the site which has not yet been published. In addition, little research appears to have been carried out on the recovered artefacts. It is therefore recommended that appropriate support and, if necessary, funding be advanced to ensure that outstanding research is undertaken and the outstanding data published in consolidated form at the earliest opportunity.