

A NATIONAL INITIATIVE TO PROTECT ANCIENT MONUMENTS IN ENGLAND

In the United Kingdom, unlike the situation in many other countries, there is no presumption that archaeological sites and monuments or portable antiquities will automatically be protected by the State, or indeed, regarded as State property. Sites and monuments, and the artefacts contained in them belong to the owner of the land on which they are located. Since Britain is full of the traces of many centuries of human activity, some form of selection and attempt at preserving representative samples of the many classes of monuments is necessary to achieve public acceptability of the protective process. Therefore any attempt to protect and preserve cultural resources requires the identification of those monuments and landscapes which may be considered to be of national importance and where certain legal constraints should be placed on their owners.

Legislation to protect cultural resources in Britain had its beginnings in 1882. It has since developed in two directions. The earliest measures covered all sites and monuments which were not in residential or ecclesiastical use (Ancient Monuments). After 1945, further legislation, associated with Town and Country Planning provisions, gave protection to buildings of all kinds, (Historic Buildings). In England (the formalities are different in Scotland and Wales) the scheduling of ancient monuments and the listing of historic buildings is done by the Secretary of State for the Environment. His statutory advisers are the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, or English Heritage, as it is more popularly known. The two strands of legislation operate side by side with some degree of overlap. Ancient Monuments are administered directly by central government. Historic Buildings are primarily the responsibility of local government, with the Secretary of State for the Environment holding reserve and appellate powers. In both areas of legislation there is a requirement for the owner or occupier to obtain consent to demolish or carry out works to a scheduled ancient monument or listed historic building. Consent may be refused or granted under conditions. There are legal penalties for failure to obtain consent. At the same time, there are incentives to preserve and maintain sites, monuments and inhabited buildings in the form of financial grants for essential repairs from central and local government, and management agreements to assist the productive use of a site in an archaeologically non-destructive way.

The identification and listing of historic buildings according to publicly stated criteria has been in progress since 1947. Since 1970, broader criteria to bring in the more notable examples of nineteenth century architecture, and more recently, a select number of post-1945

buildings, have led to a resurvey of the stock of England's historic buildings which, at accelerated rate during the last five years is due to be completed in early 1988. Already more than 400,000 buildings are protected and it is likely that the final total listed will approach half a million. The scheduling of ancient monuments, however, has been going on fitfully for more than a hundred years and no more than 13,000 sites and monuments are protected. This figure is a tiny proportion of known sites, and is unrepresentative both geographically and in terms of monument classes. One of the first issues grasped by English Heritage, following its creation three years ago, was the need for a review of England's archaeological resources and for the identification of those sites and monuments which ought to be protected by the Secretary of State. It argued that a crash programme was essential, as had been adopted for the resurvey of historic buildings, if a representative sample of those archaeological resources were to be preserved for the future against the relentless pressure of land use changes of all kinds as well as continuing agriculture. English Heritage undertook to carry out this task which it estimates may take from seven to ten years. It is called the Monuments Protection Programme.

The identification and evaluation of a country's archaeological resources is a much greater problem than assessing its architectural heritage. Despite the difficulties inherent in selection, especially on the borderline of listability, buildings are there for all to see and recognise, and even the opportunities to examine interiors and to trace the building's historical development are available. The archaeological monument is more difficult to assess. It is almost always a partial survivor, even when it remains as a standing structure, and much of its importance lies hidden below ground. The database from which any policy for identification and selection can be derived is more difficult to create and may derive from paper records more frequently than from readily visible and accessible structures. It has been estimated that there are in the region of 600,000 known archaeological sites and monuments in England with many more still to be discovered. Our problem is how to assess that moving total and to determine what and how many can and should be protected

Our database is derived from two sources: the centrally held National Archaeological Record (NAR) run by our sister organisation, the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England (RCHM), and the locally based Sites and Monuments Records (SMRs) now held in some form for each of the 46 English counties. The NAR is derived from the archaeological material compiled for the making of national maps, together with additional material obtained through the RCHM's survey and inventory work. The county SMRs have built on the national records by adding information which has been locally derived so that more than double the number of sites in the NAR are entered in the local records, with almost as many more still to be included. Information is derived from a number of sources. There are the listings and

descriptions of visible monuments which still have some standing remains, even if only slight earthworks. There is the literature of early accounts of excavations and chance discoveries and there are the more modern techniques of field prospection and aerial photography.

I should make clear that this figure of 600,000 does not relate to prehistoric sites alone or to a range of material limited by some arbitrary cut-off date. In Britain we regard archaeological resources to have no limit in time. Just as with historic buildings where we are prepared to consider the formal protection of buildings constructed only thirty years ago, so we are protecting some examples of monuments of quite recent date, such as a few of the fortifications erected during the Second World War. There is no logical distinction between the defences thrown up by our Neolithic or Iron Age ancestors from those of Roman Imperial power, from the castles and town walls of the Middle Ages or the defences constructed by the modern nation state. We have to recognise that the artefacts of today are the museum objects of tomorrow. The statutory definition of a monument allows this 'broad brush' approach. The essential nature of a monument is that it must be a structure or the remains of a structure. Portable antiquities and scatters of objects are excluded. By virtue of the most recent legislation, the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979, the remains of ships, vehicles and aircraft are included as structures.

It is, however, essential to determine the balance of sites to be protected. Neolithic communal defences are sufficiently rare for every example which survives to any extent to be protected for the future. On the other hand only a small sample of last World War pillboxes is necessary, and perhaps only one example of the remains of an innovatory industrial process. The criteria for selection and the policies for establishing representative samples have to be considered critically. We have decided that the best database for an overview of the country's cultural resource, and for policies for assessment and selection, is that provided by the county SMRs. We know that they are incomplete and many are only in the early stages of their development but in view of the continuing destruction of sites and monuments by intensive agriculture and developments of many kinds we cannot wait for perfection in the inventories. English Heritage and its predecessor has accordingly encouraged the setting up of SMRs and supported financially their improvement and enhancement.

The first stage of the Monuments Protection Programme (MPP) is to establish its methodology. This is vital, since, with the form of legal protection that we have, the judgements determining what is protected (scheduled) have to be open to scrutiny: in the courts, at public enquiries and by their owners. Public respect for the monuments of the past, and particularly for those that are formally protected, has to be encouraged and developed. Therefore selection has to be as objective and consistent as possible. With the

conflicting pressures on land use the priorities between monuments and development, and between monuments one with another, have to be argued.

At the outset, it is essential to define what are the broad classes of monuments and to write descriptions for each: eg. Neolithic ceremonial/ritual structures, Roman military works, medieval castles, pottery kilns etc. Within these monument classes there are further subsidiary types which also need descriptions. There are, for example many physical types of burial mound and as this form of burial practice has been used over many periods of history each period has its own significance. Such classifications and descriptions are not only essential for evaluating the archaeological record in an ordered way, they will be the basis for brief and simplified descriptions intended to inform the owner and occupier of the characteristics and significance of each monument.

The eight criteria for selection which have had Ministerial approval are: (i) survival/condition, (ii) period; which covers not only the date and duration of use among monument classes but also deals with the importance of monuments as relicts from a particular time, (iii) rarity; some categories of monument are so scarce that all remaining ones should be preserved, (iv) fragility/vulnerability, (v) diversity; covers the number of regional or chronological variations in form, and also the value and range of individual components within complex monument, (vi) documentation; the existence of earlier records may be important, (vii) group value, (viii) potential; where the probable existence and importance of assumed scientific potential can be demonstrated.

These criteria fall into two main groups: (1) those that relate to classes of monuments as components of the Schedule of protected monuments (ie. Period, Rarity, Group value, and Diversity), and (2) those that reflect characteristics of an individual monument itself (ie. Survival/Condition Fragility/Vulnerability, Documentation, and Potential. These distinctions are important because the way the criteria in each group are used is very different. In the first, it is possible to apply absolute values against which to make judgements. The number of recorded examples of a particular class of monument can be known, the duration and currency of its use can be gauged from archaeological evidence, and the degree of diversity can be quantified. Those criteria in the second group cannot be assigned absolute values as the characteristics of each monument must be assessed on a qualitative basis and subjective judgements made.

There are two additional important characteristics which have not been mentioned before. There is the Amenity value which reflects the importance of a monument as a visual, educational and recreational resource within the landscape. Second, there is General Conservation value which reflects the potential of a site in the context of other

conservation interests, such as the protection of the 'built' environment or nature conservation.

Axiomatic to the use of the selection criteria as a basis for evaluating monuments on a nation-wide scale is the development of an underlying structure for their application. These can be summarised as follows:

- (i) Class importance: This relates to making the monuments selected as of national importance reflect the history of the country and contain a representative selection of monuments. Not all classes of monument need to be included in equal numbers to make the list representative so it is important to establish what sort of percentage, or quota, of known examples in each class should be selected. General characteristics of each monument class are effectively measured against each other to get appropriate balance.
- (ii) Monument importance: This relates to the selection of individual sites from the range of known examples of a particular class. In this, certain characteristics of each individual site are assessed and compared with the characteristics of all the other known examples in order to get an appropriate balance.
- (iii) Circumstantial assessment: Monuments survive in all sorts of circumstances which bear little relation to their class or type but which will affect their overall importance. These are covered in the non-statutory criteria under Condition, Fragility, Vulnerability and to which we can add Amenity and General Conservation values. Their condition may be stable, unstable or deteriorating. Their construction materials, their form and structure largely determine the effects of everyday activities on their survival. They may be more or less vulnerable to deterioration or destruction according to their situation in the environment. Such criteria have an influence upon the future management of the monument.

Much of the monument evaluation and sampling will be built on class and type. There are also composite archaeological landscapes where contemporary associated groups of monuments of different classes and types can be identified and characterised, or where there is a diverse range of monuments of many periods concentrated within a limited landscape. For example, the palimpsests of cropmark sites on river gravels. These 'landscapes' too require some form of evaluation.

Having evaluated the records and adopted a 'scoring' system so that a short-list of potential monuments of national importance can be prepared and agreed by period and subject specialists, a field programme has to be put into operation. The nominated sites will require inspection. The land owners and the occupiers must be contacted for permission to go on to the land, and the nature of the monument and the consequences of scheduling it as an ancient monument must be explained to them. Much good may come from carefully designed leaflets which explain the significance and context of individual classes and types of monument. The boundaries of the protected area

have to be established and the nature of present and future land-use noted for later 'management' consideration. Too often in the past monuments, once scheduled, have been abandoned to the false security of legal protection alone. We now know that each monument ought to have a management regime. The changes of land-holding and land-use must be regularly noted and occupiers periodically reminded of the existence and significance of monuments.

It is anticipated that something in the order of 10% of the estimated total of 600,000 sites and monuments may be protected because of their national importance - an increase from 13,000 to perhaps 60,000. This we would like to achieve in 7-10 years. If we take longer than that the present rate of destruction would eliminate much of the archaeological resources that remain in England. In practice, the number of scheduled monuments when considered as land parcels will be much less because many individual sites will be subsumed into groups, such as cemeteries of burial mounds, hillforts or other settlement sites with the traces of their associated fields and with surviving evidence of earlier features within them. We estimate that this figure over this time-scale can be achieved by 20 contract field workers supervised by 3 regular inspectors. Much of the administrative and clerical work involved in preparing the schedule and informing owners and occupiers can be reduced by adopting computerised procedures from the start. The work of primary evaluation from existing records largely falls to the staff of the national and local sites and monuments records. The Monuments Protection Programme is essentially a collaborative task. It will not be a once and for all exercise. There will need to be a review as soon as it is finished because of the inevitable increase of knowledge and the progressive improvements in the records. But for the first time in England we shall have made an attempt at achieving an as consistent and objectively assessed schedule of sites and monuments as possible which can serve as the basis for the management of the nation's archaeological resource.

Andrew Saunders

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SUMMARY

In the United Kingdom, in contrast to many other countries, there is no presumption that archaeological sites and monuments will automatically be protected by the State, or indeed, regarded as State property. Instead, monuments belong to the landowner, and only those which are judged to be of national importance can be protected under existing legislation. There are two main protective codes for the man-made environment: one dealing with monuments which are not in residential or ecclesiastical use and the other dealing with historic buildings.

A survey of historic buildings to identify those which meet the criteria for listing and protection will end early in 1988. This will result in a list of nearly half a million protected buildings. English Heritage, which acts as the Department of the Environment's statutory adviser for the protection of the historic environment, places very high priority on carrying out a similar review of England's archaeological resource as the basis for managing this part of the cultural heritage. This resource is very much at risk from agriculture and development. Sites and monuments of national importance which meet the need to preserve a representative sample of monuments of all ages to reflect the history of the country will be identified. This is the Monuments Protection Programme.

There are about 13,000 protected monuments at present, out of about 600,000 known archaeological sites of all ages. It is thought that approximately 10% of this larger total are of sufficient national importance to merit scheduling as ancient monuments. The initial evaluation will be made from descriptions of sites in the central National Archaeological Record and the Sites and Monuments Records for English counties.

The first step is to define and describe the broad classes of monuments, then to sub-divide them into monument types, whether of form or period. Some classes of man-made structure are of such rarity that all coherent surviving examples will be selected, while for other classes only a sample will be sufficient. Eight criteria will operate. They fall into two groups: (i) those that relate to classes of monuments (ie. Period, Rarity, Group value and Diversity), and (ii) those that reflect the characteristics of an individual monument (ie. Survival/Condition, Fragility/Vulnerability, Documentation and Potential). There are two additional important characteristics: Amenity value and General Conservation value, which should be included in the considerations. A 'scoring' system will be developed for each criterion. Similar judgements will have to be made for archaeological landscapes where diverse or contemporary monuments are concentrated.

Having selected a short-list of sites from the records, field inspection is necessary to define the boundaries of the monument, to explain its significance to the landowner and occupier and to assess its future 'management' needs. The fieldwork is expected to require 23 full-time archaeologists and take 7-10 years to complete. This cannot be regarded, however, as a once-and-for-all exercise because it can only be as good as the records on which it is based.

RESUME

Contrairement à plusieurs d'autres pays, les monuments anciens et gites archéologiques dans le Royaume Uni ne sont pas automatiquement protégés ou en effet considérés comme propriétés d'Etat. Les monuments appartiennent aux propriétaires et ceux qui puissent être protégés par la législation courante doivent être nationalement important. L'environnement fait par l'homme est protégé par deux codes principales: le premier, servant les monuments qui sont en cours d'un emploi ni résidentiel et ni ecclésiastique, et, le second, pour les bâtiments historiques.

Les bâtiments historiques satisfaisant les critères pour être protégés seront identifiés par une étude approfondie qui finira tôt en 1988. En conséquence, une liste de près de cinq cents milles bâtiments protégés sera produite. L'"English Heritage", jouant son rôle de conseiller légale du Département de l'Environnement pour la protection de l'environnement historique, donne d'ailleurs une priorité maximum à une étude similaire du patrimoine archéologique comme étant la base pour protéger cette partie de l'héritage culturelle. L'agriculture et l'urbanisation présentent, en effet, un danger potentiel pour ce patrimoine. Alors, les gites et monument d'une importance nationale, qui méritent d'être préservés comme un échantillon pour représenter tout les époques afin de refléter l'histoire du pays, seront identifiés. C'est cela le "Monuments Protection Programme" (Programme pour la Protection des Monuments).

A présent, il y a près de 13,000 monuments protégés sur environ 600,000 gites qui ont été identifiés de tous les périodes archéologiques. Nous estimons que 10% des bâtiments de ce grand total sont nationalement assez important pour être classés comme "monuments anciens". L'évaluation commencera par les gites déjà décrites dans le "National Archaeological Records" centrale, et, les "Site and Monuments Records" des comtés d'Angleterre.

Les larges catégories de monument seront définies et dépeintes pour commencer. Puis, ils seront divisés en types individuel - d'architecture ou de période de construction. Certaines catégories des structures faits par l'homme sont si rare que tous les exemples cohérents et existants seront sélectionnés, tandis que pour d'autres, un échantillon sera suffisant. Il y aura huit critères, qui tombent en deux groupes: (i) ceux ayant rapport à des catégories de monuments (période, rareté, valeur de groupe et diversité) et, (ii) ceux qui reflètent les caractéristiques d'un monument individuel (survivance/condition, fragilité/vulnérabilité, documentation et potentiel). Il y a aussi deux autres caractéristiques d'une importance égale - les valeurs du monument pour l'utilisateur d'aujourd'hui, et, l'importance dans le cadre de la conservation générale - qui doivent être incorporés dans les considérations. Un système de point alloués par importance sera développé pour chaque critère. Des jugements parallèles seront appliqués aux paysages archéologiques où se trouve une concentration de monuments contemporaines ou diverses.

Ayant établi une liste des gites qui ont le potentiel d'être classés, utilisant les rapports existantes des inspections locales sont nécessaires afin de définir les bornes du 'monument' pour expliquer son importance au propriétaire ou à l'occupant. Cela nous aidera aussi à déterminer les futures nécessités "administratives" pour sa préservation. On estime qu'il nous faudra le travail de 23 archéologues pour 7 à 10 années pour compléter cela. Cependant, ce procès ne peut être regardé comme étant absolument final parce que ce ne sera qu'aussi bon que les registres sur lesquelles tout dépend.