

Topic Paper 9: Cultural Heritage

Policy Context

Overall aim or purpose of document	Objectives/targets
PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994)	
<p>This PPG provides a full statement of Government policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas, and other elements of the historic environment. It explains the role played by the planning system in their protection.</p>	<p>Objectives Does not contains a specific set of objectives, but does state that 'the protection of the historic environment, whether individual listed buildings, conservation areas, parks and gardens, battlefields will need to be taken fully into account both in the formulation of authorities' planning policies and in development control'.</p> <p>Targets No specific targets.</p>
PPG16: Archaeology and Planning (1990)	
<p>This guidance sets out the Secretary of State's policy on archaeological remains on land, and how they should be preserved or recorded both in an urban setting and in the countryside. It gives advice on the handling of archaeological remains and discoveries under the development plan and control systems, including the weight to be given to them in planning decisions and the use of planning conditions.</p>	<p>Objectives PPG16 set out that development plans should include policies for the protection, enhancement and preservation of sites of archaeological interest and of their settings. Archaeological remains should be seen as a finite and non-renewable resource.</p> <p>Targets No specific targets.</p>
Environmental Quality in Spatial Planning (Countryside Agency, English Heritage, English Nature and Environment Agency, 2005)	
<p>This guidance sets out how planning authorities can achieve high standards of environmental quality in planning, by moving away from a "topic-based" towards an "objectives-led" approach to plans and strategies.</p> <p>Supplementary files accompany this document, providing information to assist with the preparation of regional spatial strategies and local development documents. Of relevance to this plan is Supplementary File 14 which provides a checklist of environmental and rural issues to be considered when scoping the local development framework. Topics covered include: accessibility, locally distinctive and valued development, sustainable development, climate change, renewable energy, designated areas (e.g. national parks and conservation areas), enhancement of environmental and heritage resources, environmental protection, waste, vibrant and inclusive rural communities, and sustainable recreation.</p>	<p>Objectives This document does not contain any specific objectives, but it suggests 'recommended actions' for planning authorities. It recommends that planning authorities should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the agencies* at the earliest stages of the plan/strategy process, to help scope the rural issues in the plan and the evidence base needed to address them (*CA, EA, EN, EH) • Be encouraged to be more ambitious in their initiatives for conservation, enhancement and better management of the environment in rural areas • Undertake detailed historic landscape characterisation assessments and set out appropriate policies and proposals for different character areas • Ensure plans/strategies encourage and accommodate unforeseen, innovative and inspirational developments that could add value to an area, whilst ensuring consistency with other plans/policies • To ensure local needs are met by distinctive, local development that is valued by the community • Use construction and design techniques to encourage more sustainable forms of development; favouring retention of existing buildings with their historic associations • Develop plans and strategies that identify benefits which can be secured through particular developments and indicate the scale, location and type of community benefits will be delivered <p>Supplementary File 14 identifies key issues to</p>

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	<p>address in the development of a plan document. These will be addressed as SA objectives if applicable</p> <p>Targets No specific targets.</p>
Protecting our historic environment: making the system work better (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2003)	
<p>This document sets out some possible changes to improve the way the historic environment is protected. The review identifies which areas of the current system require change and invites comments from stakeholders and the public on how these changes could be achieved. The Government is considering the issue of guidance to make clear what plans district authorities will be expected to develop for the protection and enhancement of the historic environment as part of their LDF and sustainability planning</p>	<p>The review has identified four areas in the current system which require improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to simplify existing protection systems • Improve transparency and openness in the designation of sites/buildings for protection • To create more flexible regimes for managing the historic environment • To develop a system that is robust enough to preserve the best sites/buildings, whilst continuing to take on board changes in what people value
Draft Heritage Protection Bill (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2008)	
<p>The draft Heritage Protection Bill was published in April 2008. It is a draft Bill for England and Wales, which sets out the legislative framework for a unified and simpler heritage protection system that will be more open, accountable and transparent.</p> <p>The new system has been designed to provide more opportunities for public involvement and community engagement in understanding, preserving and managing our heritage.</p>	<p>The Draft Bill would put in place a unified heritage protection system that is easier to understand and use, more efficient, accountable and transparent, and maximises opportunities for public inclusion and involvement.</p> <p>It will remove unhelpful distinctions between different designation regimes (listing, scheduling, registering) to deliver a system that works for the whole historic environment.</p> <p>It will devolve terrestrial designation decisions on assets in England from the Secretary of State to English Heritage, and unifying consents for works to terrestrial assets which will be administered by Local Authorities in England</p>
The Historic Environment: A Force for Our Future (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2001)	
<p>This statement sets out the intention of the Government to protect the historic environment recognising its major contribution to the economy in rural and deprived communities as well as in traditional economic centres. It also states the need for the development of new policies to further realise economic and educational potential.</p>	<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The historic environment is accessible to everybody and is seen as something with which the whole of society can identify and engage • The historic environment is protected and sustained for the benefit of our own and future generations. <p>Targets No specific targets.</p>
A Strategy for the Historic Environment in the South West (English Heritage, 2004)	
<p>This is the first strategy for the historic environment in the South West. It has been prepared on behalf of the South West Historic Environment Forum, a group representing the key historic agencies and organisations active within the region. It represents an important first step in raising the profile of the historic environment and ensuring it is reflected fully in the key strategies, plans and policies that will guide change over the coming years. Priorities for the Historic Environment Strategy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Historic Environment is 	<p>Objectives Regional priorities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to improve knowledge and understanding of the South West's historic environment and reflect this in informed and positive conservation and enhancement of the historic environment • Put conservation at the heart of urban renewal and regeneration strategies, initiatives and proposals right across the South West • Encourage wider appreciation and conservation of the historic dimension of

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<p>integrated into the Region's Policy Framework;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop positive and creative partnerships that reflect the many linkages and opportunities in the South West; • Ensure the Historic Environment is accessible and relevant to people in their everyday lives; and • Raise awareness of the historic dimension of the wider environment and its contribution to quality of life. 	<p>rural areas. Explore ways in which agri-environment and other funding initiatives could provide further support for the sustainable management of this part of the South West's historic resource</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the understanding of the South West's coastal and maritime historic environments and wetland landscapes as a matter of urgency. Work with those responsible for managing these environments and, where appropriate, seek adequate protection • Promote the design of buildings and landscape that is sensitive to its location. Enhance the South West's historic environment and, ultimately, add to it by championing appropriate, contemporary solutions to design problems • Promote the use of traditional conservation and management skills wherever possible and ensure professionals have a good understanding of current best practice • Promote the widest understanding and appreciation of the historic environment at local, county and regional levels • Remove physical, cultural and social barriers which inhibit access, understanding or enjoyment of the South West's historic environment • Tackle the legacy created by poor management and maintenance of the historic environment across the South West • Increase the historic environment's contribution to the economic well being of the region by encouraging and supporting its sustainable use and sensitive reflection in new development <p>Targets No specific targets.</p>
A Better Place to be: Culture and South West England (September, 2008)	
<p>The Cultural Strategy for the South West sets out what the region can achieve by working together and how best to achieve it. The document contains information on the actions required to achieve its four key objectives and identifies the partners that need to be involved.</p> <p>The vision of the document is: <i>South West England is the region of choice for vibrant cultural activity, where engaged individuals build creative communities, where culture is seen as a core component of all regional development and a vital contributor to the quality of life of everyone in the region.</i></p>	<p>The document does not appear to have objectives or targets but does have an action plan which sets out actions for each of the strategy partners.</p> <p>The document states that the cultural sector can enhance our distinctive environments and the quality and diversity of our cultural life by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering carbon reduction targets and adaptation to unavoidable climate change when developing cultural infrastructure • Lending a sense of identity and place to new and regenerated communities • Ensuring quality design in urban planning • Ensuring that cultural projects and events form part of the assessment of needs for planning development briefs
Somerset's Culture – Something to declare - A cultural strategy for the county of Somerset 2002 (Somerset County Council, 2002)	

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<p>Following guidance from the Government Department of Culture, Media and Sport, Somerset has produced a Countywide Cultural Strategy. The strategy has been developed in partnership between the County Council, the District Councils and Exmoor National Park Authority using information collated from research and public consultation. The document sets out what makes the culture of Somerset distinctive and creates an action plan outlining some key issues for improving and enhancing the cultural life of Somerset.</p>	<p>Overarching objective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create a significant and measurable increase in the range and quality of cultural opportunities for people to enjoy in Somerset by promoting the county's cultural well-being and give local authorities a clear rationale for action when they fund or support cultural services and activities. <p>Action Plan (only the actions where WSC is a key partner have been included)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving Somerset's cultural buildings • Involve young people in consultation work and engage them in decisions • Celebrate diversity • Protecting and enhancing key landscape • Promoting public arts initiative • Sharing cultural information and education • Preservation of Somerset's building vernacular • Marketing Somerset as a sustainable tourism destination • Community based cultural initiatives and projects • Developing the health benefits of culture • Active sport programme • Support cultural activities as tools for lifelong learning

Baseline Review

This section reviews the available baseline information on cultural heritage for West Somerset.

Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments

Information on listed buildings and scheduled monuments in West Somerset (and how these have changed over time) is shown in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1: Listed buildings and scheduled monuments

	Listed Buildings				Scheduled Monuments
	Grade I	Grade II*	Grade II	Total	ALL
2006	15	56	641	712	155
2008	34	99	1101	1234	197

(Source: Heritage Counts 2008 data tables and information from previous topic paper)

The *Buildings at Risk Register* is published annually and brings together information on all Grade I and II* listed buildings, and scheduled monuments (structures rather than earthworks), known to English Heritage to be 'at risk' through neglect and decay, or vulnerable to becoming so. In 2005 in Somerset there were 20 buildings considered to be at risk, two of which were in West Somerset, these were identified to be in poor condition:

- Remains of Chantry at Kilve, Sea Lane (Listed Building Grade II*).
- Ironstone Mine Ventilation Shaft in Chargot Wood (Scheduled Monument).

In 2009 the total number of buildings at risk in Somerset has decreased to 17. The same two structures in West Somerset are still at risk.

Somerset County Council has indicated that the West Somerset Council local planning authority area was last surveyed in 1999 as part of a county wide Buildings at Risk (BAR) survey and this is due to be updated. A revised BAR is in the work programme of the Somerset County Council Historic Environment Service but is unlikely to be undertaken for some time. A recent re-survey of Sedgemoor District Council has added many more buildings to the register for that area and Somerset County Council anticipate the same for West Somerset. A Monuments at Risk survey is currently being undertaken for Somerset. The results are not yet available.

Registered Landscapes

In 2008, the South West has a total of 292 registered parks and gardens (an increase of 5.8% compared to 2002). This is 18.3% of England's total (a much greater proportion of England's average) (Source: Heritage Counts 2008 – South West).

In 2009 there were 38 registered parks and gardens in Somerset (Source: Somerset Gardens Trust) and this has not changed since 2004. Three of these sites are located in West Somerset. These are:

- Crowcombe Court (101ha) Grade II Landscape garden
- Fairfield (30ha) Grade II Enclosed garden
- St Audries (45ha) Grade II Garden, woodland & landscaped deer park

There are no registered battlefields in West Somerset.

Somerset County Council has carried out an Historic Landscape Characterisation study for Somerset. This is an English Heritage national programme which is carried out by local government. Historic Landscape Characterisation is a GIS-based archaeological method for defining the historic and archaeological dimension of the present-day landscape. It can explain how and why the landscape looks as it does, identify landscape's 'time-depth' and facilitate sustainable management. Figure 10.1 shows the historic landscape assessment map.

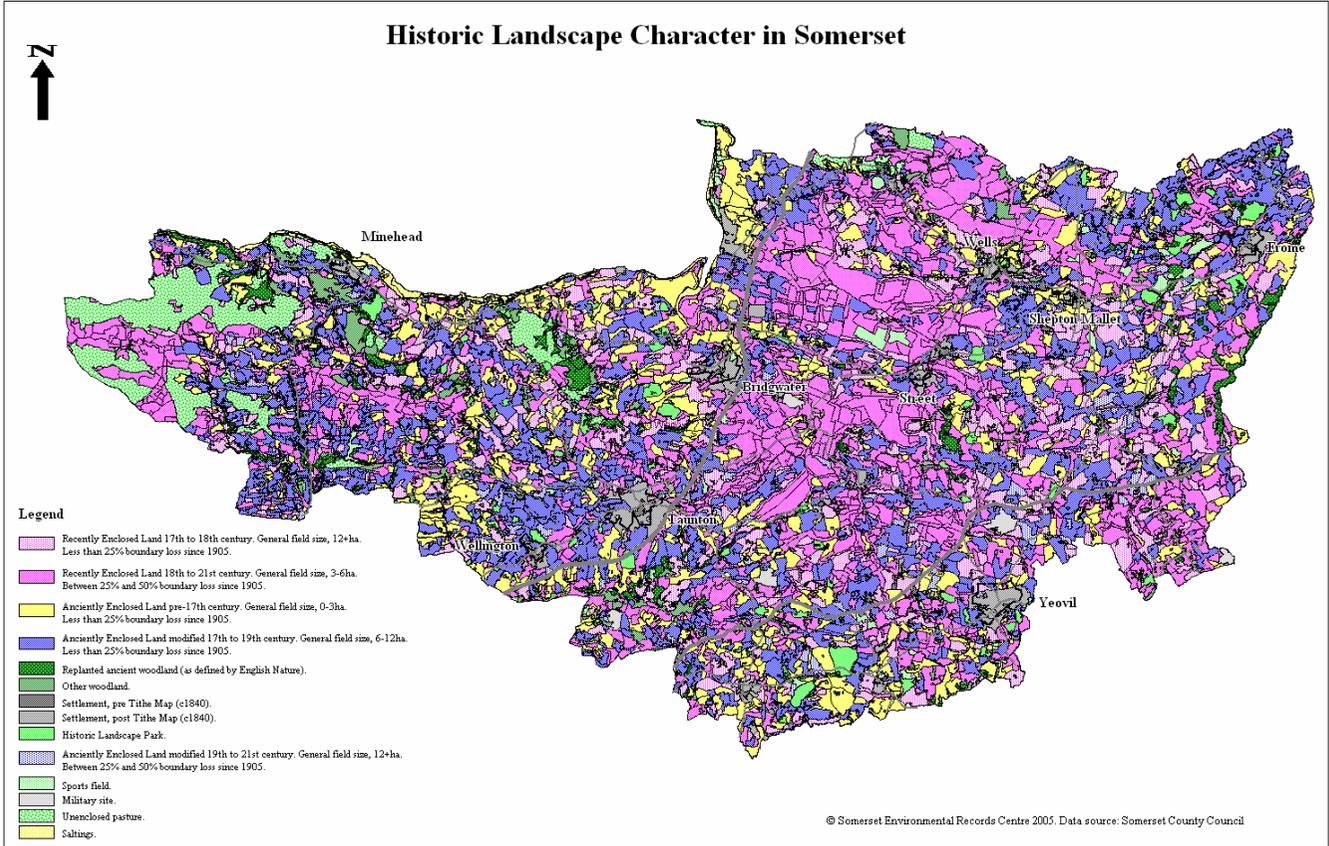


Figure 10.1:
Historic
Landscape
Character

 This map shows the historic landscape character designations for Somerset

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Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are any “areas of special architectural or historic interest to preserve or enhance”. There are 9,374 conservation areas in England, of which 1,530 (16%) are in the South West.

With the West Somerset Council local planning authority area there are 9 conservation areas (Source: Heritage Counts 2008). These are Alcombe, Holford, Minehead (three Areas), Old Cleeve, Stogumber, Stogursey and Watchet.

Extensive Urban Survey

This is an English Heritage sponsored project covering survey of smaller historic towns. The studies assessed the history, archaeology and historic topography of each town with the information presented in a report and transferred to the Historic Environment Record. For the West Somerset Council local planning authority area the EUS covered the settlements of:

- Crowcombe
- Stogumber
- Stogursey
- Minehead
- Watchet
- Williton

These reports can be viewed at www.somerset.gov.uk/heritage. However, these reports are too detailed to include at this stage. It is recommended that they are reviewed by West Somerset Council before embarking on the Site Allocations DPD and be classed as part of the evidence base for that part of the LDF.

Areas of High Archaeological Potential

Areas of high archaeological potential (AHAP) are identified as most likely to contain important archaeological features and artefacts; the designation offers protection to sites whose archaeological value remains to be assessed. (Source: Somerset and Exmoor Joint Structure Plan Review). There are 27 AHAPs in West Somerset and these should be given further consideration at the assessment stage of the appraisal.

Proposed modifications to the West Somerset Local Plan include the addition of an area in Monksilver on to the register of ‘Areas of High Archaeological Potential’ (Source: West Somerset Council).

Sources of Data

- Heritage Counts 2008 in South West: http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/hc/upload/pdf/HC08_SouthWest_Acc.pdf?1240327882
- West Somerset Council: www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/home.asp
- South West Environment Observatory (SWENO): <http://www.swenvo.org.uk/>

- Somerset County Council: www.somerset.gov.uk
- English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register 2008

Data Gaps

There is no data available regarding the funding requirements for the management and restoration of heritage assets within West Somerset, nor the total number of listed buildings or scheduled monuments at risk of falling into disrepair if restoration and management plans are not implemented.

Cultural heritage issues identified

A detailed consultation response was received from Somerset County Council Historic Environment Service (K Lyon, pers comm. (16/05/06).) which indicated the following issues.

- Loss of historic patterns of development, plots and boundaries (historic grain) i.e. loss of gardens accompanying larger historic houses and loss of backland burgage plots in the historic core of settlements.
- Demolition of unlisted buildings and structures of local historic or architectural merit. Loss of gardens, other curtilage areas and boundary features important to the character of historic buildings. Loss of architectural features and detailing to historic buildings, i.e. replacement of windows.
- Standardisation and cluttering of the public realm and restrictions on the creation of good quality new external spaces.
- Mixed quality of architectural design and sensitivity to the historic environment for new developments including lack of good boundary treatment for new developments.
- Loss of local architectural distinctiveness with the diminished use and reference to traditional local materials and architectural detailing.
- Erosion of registered and non-registered historic parks and gardens.
- Corresponding rise in the level of detailed archaeological assessments and larger scale archaeological excavations as development control mitigation with the rise in 'brownfield' developments. Financial implication for development costs.
- As 80% of the land use in West Somerset is agricultural, there is an increasing need to preserve the known and unknown archaeological baseline of the area; the preservation of buried archaeological sites, conservation areas and registered landscapes conflicts with the requirements for a larger stock of good affordable housing.

Trends

A detailed consultation response was received from Somerset County Council Historic Environment Service (K Lyon, pers comm. (16/05/06).) which indicated the following trends.

- New and dense development is being focused onto existing urban sites, which are invariably areas of high architectural and historic significance. There is also subdivision of larger properties to multi occupancies.

- There is a perceived lack of planning control over and understanding of the loss of undesignated historic buildings and structures of local or regional architectural or historic interest. There is also a perceived conflict between conserving the historic environment and requirements of highway control and energy conservation.
- There is continued pressure for development within registered and non-registered historic parks and gardens, often presented as ‘enabling development’.
- There are also a number of trends evident in the study, management and appreciation of the historic environment which will have implications for the plan. These include a planned unified heritage consent regime in line with the recognition that architectural heritage and archaeological sites are interwoven and should be considered together as the ‘historic environment’; recognition that the historic environment is the context for all new development and a catalyst for regeneration, and that its proper understanding is essential for successful town and country planning; increased community appreciation and participation in the local heritage and increasing appreciation of late 19th and 20th century buildings, industrial archaeology and farmsteads.

Implications for the plan and the SA

The plan will need to:

- Consider the ability of the environment or heritage to accommodate development and steer it towards less sensitive areas;
- Ensure new development is well related to the natural environment and characteristic scale, form materials and detailing of the settlement;
- Encourage distinctive development e.g. to enhance local distinctiveness and contribute to a sense of place;
- Encourage sustainable design and construction, including maintaining traditional building skills;
- Indicate that development proposals will not be permitted where there would be an adverse affect on listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens, and historic battlefields.
- Indicate that only proposals that preserve or enhance the appearance of a Conservation Area and its setting will be permitted.
- Indicate that development that would prejudice the implementation of a Conservation Area will not be permitted.
- Promote the enhancement of the archaeological resource.
- Promote the enhancement of other aspects of heritage, such as, parks and open spaces, and areas with a particular historical or cultural association.
- Encourage the proper evaluation of architectural and historical significance of a site in support of development proposals (suggested by Somerset County Council Historic Environment Service).

(Ref. *Environmental Quality in Spatial Planning* – English Heritage, English Nature, Environment Agency, 2005):

Suggested SA Objectives and Indicators

SA objectives	Appraisal questions. Will the plan lead to...
<p>Protect the fabric and setting of designated and undesignated archaeological sites, monuments, structures and buildings, recorded Historic Parks and gardens, maritime and coastal heritage, listed buildings and conservation areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development that affects listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens? • Development being steered to where it can be accommodated in less sensitive areas? • Distinctive development that is well related to the natural environment and characteristic scale, form materials and detailing of the settlement and contributes to a sense of place? • The enhancement of the archaeological resource and other aspects of heritage, such as, parks and open spaces, and areas with a particular historical or cultural association?