

Heritage Crime

What is heritage crime?

Heritage crime is any offence which **harms the value of heritage assets and their settings**. It covers a wide variety of activities that are responsible for damaging assets that are of particular historical interest and includes:

- Architectural Theft
- Planning Enforcement refusal, unauthorised development and excavation
- Public Urination (Anti-social Behaviour)
- Arson and Unauthorised fires
- Metal Theft and Unauthorised metal detecting
- Advertising / Fly posting
- Criminal Damage / Graffiti (Anti-social Behaviour)
- Vehicular damage

Whilst heritage sites are not necessarily being targeted by criminals, with the exception of churches and monuments targeted for their lead and metal, most assets are being damaged by people **who aren't aware** of the impact their behaviours or actions are having. Examples of this would be public urination, graffiti and fly posting.

Due to the very nature of heritage assets, putting right damage is **costly** to the public purse. For example, the recent rise in metal theft from ancient monuments is leading to repair bills of **hundreds of thousands of pounds** when damage is caused by the removal of the metal and weather damage when roofs are left open to the elements.

England's heritage assets include:

- World Heritage Sites;
- Scheduled monuments;
- Listed Buildings;
- Protected wreck sites;
- Conservation Areas
- Registered Parks and Gardens;
- Registered Battlefields;
- Protected military remains of aircraft and vessels of historic interest; and
- Undesignated but acknowledged buildings and sites of heritage significance.

Some of these assets are designated (such as listed buildings and scheduled monuments) and there is a consent regime and specific offences in law to protect certain designated heritage assets against damage and unlicensed alteration. These offences are set out in the Heritage Crime Memorandum of Understanding

There are however some designated heritage assets that have no separate consent regime and no specific regulatory offences which apply to them. These assets include Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and World Heritage Sites, although they may contain designated heritage assets that are themselves regulated e.g. listed buildings, scheduled monuments, conservation areas.

More general crimes such as theft, removal of objects of historic interest, criminal damage, arson and offences of antisocial behavior to name but a few, can lead to harm to both designated and nondesignated heritage assets.

Policing The Past

A number of different agencies have been looking at the problem of heritage crime and have come together to see what can be done to protect heritage assets for future generations.

What is Heritage Watch?

Heritage Watch is a network of partners and community groups who hold knowledge and current information relating to heritage locations within their community. Heritage Watch brings communities together to care for the environment in which they live and is a fantastic approach to preserving Cheshire's Heritage for future generations.

This is the first scheme of its kind in the country and will connect local people to heritage sites within their community.

This is achieved by:

Receiving and cascading information:

- Neighbourhood police updates

- Crime reduction information

- Warnings e.g: rogue traders, scams, safety

- Sharing community information with: Each other, police, agencies and voluntary groups

- Working with the police and other agencies to solve problems where there are community concerns

- Help to increase the security of heritage assets through awareness, prevention and action.

- Activities undertaken by a Heritage Watch Group

- Members will agree to share their contact information with their local Heritage Watch Champion

Each Heritage Watch Group will be registered with the police via their local Champion

Groups will use an e-mail system to share weekly updates from the police and other agencies and will provide verbal or written updates for non email members

Each group will receive and cascade information between members such as policing updates, crime reduction information and other information e.g. unauthorised building work

Sharing community information with each other, police, other agencies and voluntary groups

Use their local knowledge of Heritage sites to keep a special 'watch' on Heritage assets 'at risk'

Work with Police and other agencies to solve Heritage issues / problems.

Alliance to Reduce Crime against Heritage (ARCH)

The Alliance to Reduce Crime against Heritage (ARCH) is a new voluntary national network which will take forward initiatives to tackle heritage crime and galvanise local action as part of the Heritage Crime Programme.

The overriding objective of the group is to reduce the amount of crime that causes damage to or interferes with the enjoyment of heritage assets in England.

Members of ARCH have a shared interest in preventing and seeing effective enforcement of heritage crime. Through conferences and training events, the group will be a means of discussing priorities, sharing information about heritage crime, carrying out training, highlighting best practice and making local contacts.

Theft of Metal from Churches and Heritage Buildings

English Heritage Police

English Heritage's policy is that lead should be retained wherever possible. When replacement is necessary it is desirable to use lead on a like-for-like basis, with appropriate security measures installed to deter theft. English Heritage strongly supports the installation of security systems where appropriate to protect roofs and will include the expense of these as an eligible cost when assessing applications to the Repair Grants for Places of Worship Scheme.

In some circumstances like-for-like replacement following a theft is not prudent. In such situations, we will consider supporting proposals for the replacement of stolen lead with an alternative material after one incidence of theft, if we are persuaded that security measures are unlikely to prevent further attacks and the proposed alternative material is suitable.

In offering advice to congregations English Heritage will try to balance the ideal - which means like-for-like replacement to maintain the significance of a building - and the pragmatic, which recognises another material might be more likely to secure the continued use of the building. Where change is proposed, any harm done to the significance of the building would need to be outweighed by the good done in ensuring its long-term wind- and water-tightness in order to be justifiable.

In accordance with the Code of Practice for the Ecclesiastical Exemption para 4 (ii) footnote 25, English Heritage would expect to be consulted on proposal to change roofing materials on grade I or II* churches.

2 In this note, we refer to “lead” as most metal stolen from church roofs is lead, but the principles apply to any metal used to cover buildings. The principles also apply to the theft of other metals, lightning conductors, brassware, monumental brasses as well as stone roofing slates and paving, and clay edging, all of which have been stolen from churches. Appendix 1 gives some background to the current spate of thefts.

In this note, “church” is used to refer to a place of worship used by Christian denominations. Other places of worship may be targeted, but the overwhelming majority of thefts are from listed parish churches. This guidance note sets out English Heritage’s¹ response to the epidemic of lead theft² which is affecting historic buildings and, in particular, parish churches³. We recognise that any theft brings frustration, expense and inconvenience to congregations. Preventing future thefts is paramount, but dealing with the unfortunate aftermath in an appropriate way is also very important.

This guidance is in two parts: the first outlines English Heritage’s approach and our advice for congregations on the significance of lead, how to protect it, and how to respond to thefts; the second offers detailed practical information about selecting the material to be used for historic church roofs and making it secure.

2. What Should We Do To Protect Our Metal From Theft?

Prevention and security has to be carefully tailored to particular buildings in specific locations, taking into account the resources that congregations have available. The purpose of this section is to encourage everyone to take simple, low-cost measures and to seek advice from their architect/surveyor, insurer and the police about what is feasible and appropriate. In order to prevent the theft of metals it is important to understand the circumstances which lead to them being stolen:

- the asset value
- its vulnerability
- the threat posed by criminals

THEFT OF METAL FROM HERITAGE BUILDINGS

The first two can be dealt with together by assessing risks to the site. Think about the value of the asset - the type of metal, its quantity and ease of removal are all important. It is also worth inspecting the building and grounds to quantify the metals, note where they are located and assess how easy it would be for a vehicle to collect it and take it away. How easy is it to climb onto roofs? Would a thief be seen? A sample risk assessment can be found in Appendix II.

Preventing crime is about making life as difficult as possible for the criminal. Basic and inexpensive measures - such as keeping wheelie bins secure, so they cannot be used to help criminals onto the roof or to wheel removed lead to waiting vans - apply to most buildings. In rural areas farmers have a lot of experience of obstructing vehicular access to land and property, which might also provide simple, practical options for churches. Equally, in an urban situation, making all users of the building and neighbours aware of the need to be alert could make all the difference. Wherever the building is sited, developing good relationships with the local policing team should be beneficial.

The criminals carrying out this crime broadly fall into three categories:

Chaotic offenders - typically youths carrying out low-level opportunist crimes, stealing only what they can carry by hand

Local career criminals – more organised, using vehicles and stealing greater quantities

Organised criminals – travel long distances to target the most lucrative sites.

The metals are disposed of via two main routes, either by selling to scrap-metal dealers or by shipping them abroad in containers. Organised criminals arrange or carry out their own smelting.

Any building is at risk from metal theft; not only the insecure or remote ones are threatened. Typically, buildings with highly valuable fittings and fixtures are most likely to be targeted by organised thieves, irrespective of their location. Organised thieves will plan an attack and try to find ways to overcome security measures. Chaotic offenders are likely to be less discriminating and may target any vulnerable and accessible source, which is why regular reassessment of basic security is important.

The police are increasingly aware of the problem and are mounting a number of operations to intercept materials. Nonetheless, the prime responsibility for preventing theft usually lies with the building occupier.

General Advice:

AWARENESS AND SURVEILLANCE

Contact your local Neighbourhood Police Team www.police.uk/ and make sure the police are aware of your circumstances and the value of any metals on the site. Try to find out how they deal with such problems and ask their advice about prevention. Check whether there are particular problems with metal theft in the locality. Ask if there is a Key Individual Network, in which your church could be a partner.

Consider all the preventative measures described in section 2 (page 4) and seek advice from your insurer and denominational advisory body. If a new roof is being partly funded by a grant from the Repair Grants for Places of Worship Scheme, appropriate security measures will be expected to be part of the proposal; the cost of installing an electrical security alarm system will be eligible for grant-aid.

Maximise surveillance levels of the property, including cutting back tall trees and vegetation close to buildings, which could provide a screen to hide criminal activities. Consult the local authority to find out what approvals (if any) are needed from them in relation to trees. Church of England congregations should also consult their Archdeacon in case the work requires authorisation by faculty.

Consider the installation of security lighting, particularly at roof level where metal roof coverings are present. Fittings should be inaccessible and/or vandal resistant. Advice on siting lights should be obtained from a security expert, to ensure they do not create shadow areas where a thief can operate or escape unseen. Avoid lighting areas that are secluded and not overlooked – you might be assisting the thieves' activity. Check what consents may be needed with denominational advisory bodies, the local authority and your architect/surveyor.

Encourage members of the local community to keep a vigilant eye on the building and to report any suspicious activity immediately to the police, particularly the unexpected arrival of workmen or unknown vans parked near the church at night. Even if suspicious individuals can give a plausible answer when approached, ask for proof of identity. If none is offered take the number of their vehicle and alert the police. Genuine contractors will not be offended if you make telephone calls to check who they are.

The best way of engaging with the community will vary, but might include leafleting local households, giving brief presentations to groups that use church premises and displaying posters.

One particularly resourceful churchwarden has created and is prominently displaying his own warning notice, requesting that members of the public call the police if they see

vans or workmen around the building between 6 p.m. and 8 a.m., as they are probably stealing the lead roof.

PHYSICAL SECURITY MEASURES

Part of any security strategy involves making it more difficult to get at the valuable items, as well as limiting the escape routes open to a thief caught in the act. The following are low cost suggestions that might be considered:

Make the thieves' job more difficult by removing any easy access onto building roofs, such as water butts, waste bins and tall trees located in close proximity to the building

If there is statuary or other metal objects, including railings around tombs, in the curtilage of the building, make sure they are well anchored to the ground or to a fixed structure. Steel armatures or dowels can be fitted retrospectively, but it is advisable to consult a security specialist on what should be used. A suitably experienced craftsman/tradesman could do this work, although it might need to be undertaken by a conservator if the item is fragile, valuable or of historical importance. Listed building consent or denominational permission may be required for this work.

Consider planting beds of dense prickly bushes to reinforce existing boundaries, for instance by growing alongside perimeter fences. They could also be used more strategically and make access routes onto roofs less attractive. Use wide, low beds where it is important to retain good views. It is best to avoid planting close to the building or where shrubs will make access for routine maintenance more difficult. Church of England congregations must check with their Archdeacon to find out if they need permission for such planting.

Store ladders in a secure place to prevent their unauthorised use. Special precautions must be taken when building works are in progress

As far as it is safe to do so, conduct regular checks of roofs so the theft of roofing materials is detected at the earliest opportunity. This will also identify action to prevent rainwater from entering the building, causing further damage. Do not forget that the great weight of lead means that thieves often only remove a small amount at a time and expect to make a number of repeat visits. Being aware that the roof is an active target gives the police an opportunity to apprehend the thieves when they return.

Apply anti-climb paint to drain pipes, roof guttering and sections of scaffolding to restrict access to roofing. Regulations say that the paint should not be applied below a height of 2m and that a warning notice indicating it has been applied must be prominently displayed.

Protect the lower section of lightning conductor ribbons using a metal cage or sheath securely fixed to the fabric of the building.

Keep gates locked and generally restrict vehicular access to the site. Consider some means of blocking approaches, whilst making it possible for legitimate traffic to get close to the building e.g. funeral and wedding cars. In urban situations, installing telescopic bollards might be appropriate, but in rural areas, other options will be more suitable.

If sheet lead is to be put back on a roof, consider having it fixed using hollow rolled sheet rather than wood-core rolled sheet. The copper fixings used to secure hollow rolled sheet lead make it more difficult to remove. For further information on hollow rolls

If lead is to be used for replacement, discuss security measures with the local Neighbourhood Police Team. Consider all the preventative measures described above and seek advice from your insurer and denominational advisory body. If the new lead is being partly funded by a grant from the English Heritage/HLF Repair Grants for Places of Worship Scheme, the cost of installing an electrical security alarm system will be eligible for grant-aid.

Another option is to consider using mechanical fixings such as LedLok that make it more difficult to remove lead. Such fixing systems anchor the lead, but still allow thermal movement. Visually they are relatively unobtrusive, appearing as a series of small butt-welded patches. It can be fitted onto existing roofs, although this does mean lifting all the sheets.

PROPERTY MARKING METAL GOODS

There are three techniques available when using marking metals:

- a. forensic marking to provide unique identification
 - b. forensic grease that marks the thief as well as the metal
 - c. simple mechanical stamping
- a. There are a variety of products available to uniquely identify items so that if they are stolen and recovered they can be traced back to their owner. SmartWater® is an academically-proven crime reduction strategy based on forensic technology, which includes property marking. It is now a requirement for Ecclesiastical's policyholders to use it and it has been adopted widely by the police in the UK. As a result of the overt police support, it has been adopted by Scottish Power, United Utilities and CE Networks to protect copper cable and Ecclesiastical Insurance Group to protect the lead roofs of client churches. The police are carrying out spot checks on scrap metal looking for SmartWater®, making it risky for thieves to keep stolen material. There have been over 600 successful prosecutions in UK as a result of SmartWater® and it retains a 100%

conviction rate. An explanatory video can be found at: www.smartwater.com/Video.aspx (NB SmartWater® is one of a range of forensic property marking products available which can be used to mark property. A list of such products can be found at www.securedbydesign.com/companies and click on Forensic Marking)

b. The marking material can also be applied as a grease that provides transference from the metal to the thief. This means that both the item to be protected and the thief are likely to be marked and linked to the same crime-scene. Because of its cost, it would not normally be applied as complete coverage, but at the points where access is most likely to occur e.g. on lower-level roofs such as vestries or porches, above oil tanks. Two companies provide this product: www.selectadna.co.uk and www.redwebsecurity.com.

Both these products are invisible to the naked eye, but fluoresce under ultraviolet light. The starting price for the applied products is around £500, but some insurers have made special low-cost arrangements for their clients. It is vital that congregations register the use of forensic marking so that stolen metal can be traced back to the particular church.

c. As a low-tech option, metal can be indented with marks of ownership using a simple hand stamp and hammer. The design of these stamps can be tailored to the church or diocese and can form an attractive feature if used in a repeated design. As a visible presence these stamps will be particularly useful where the disposal route is a local scrap metal dealer. Several engraving services provide custom hand stamps for metal including: www.pryormarking.com and www.eyreandbaxter.co.uk

Where security marking is to be applied at height, a risk assessment should be completed to identify a safe system of work which will be followed during its application. Some gutter clearance or maintenance schemes offer the application of forensic marking as part of their contract.

Congregations are advised that warning notices alerting thieves that security marking has been used are usually prominently displayed around the building. This will act as a deterrent.

Electrical Systems

English Heritage advises that, where circumstances make it appropriate, metal roofs should be protected by alarms. Where a roof is to be re-covered using metal, whether as part of planned repairs or because of a theft, we encourage congregations to include the installation of an appropriate system, ideally before the new roof is put down so that it is protected during building works.

Where systems are being installed on existing roofs, English Heritage is content for the installation to be authorised by denominational authorities (e.g. De Minimis in Church of England parishes) without prior consultation with us, subject to the church architect or

surveyor supervising cable routes and fixings to ensure damage to historic fabric is minimised.

In cases where the new work is being partly funded by the Repair Grants for Places of Worship Scheme English Heritage will include the cost of an appropriate security system as an eligible item in assessing the project.

An electronic security system has been trialled on churches in areas where lead theft is rife and it has prevented thefts. It uses wireless technology and when activated, raises a local audible/visual alarm and remote transmission to a 24-hour, manned receiving centre. Action is then taken in line with customer instructions. The system is virtually invisible, reversible with minimal intervention into the fabric. A factsheet is available at www.ecclesiastical.com/theftofmetal. Other contractors may offer similar systems.

If a security system is installed using lighting as the form of alarm it might be possible to consider using strobe lighting, which hinders rather than helps thieves and is more likely to attract neighbours' attention than a steady continuous beam.

An alternative approach is to install vibration detection to the underside of the roof substrate. Depending on the substrate characteristics, each detector will cover a radius of about 2m. In considering this approach, it is important to bear in mind that each device will need to be accessible for maintenance. Wire-free movement detectors may be the most appropriate for protecting historic buildings. They are also more quickly deployed.

Consider installing a closed circuit television (CCTV) system, incorporating movement detection, linked to a remote video monitoring station. This could also include loudspeakers. The operator will be able to warn-off intruders and call police to site. Systems should comply with BS 8418. Warning notices should be displayed prominently around the site. Remember that some form of lighting will be required in most cases. As a guide, even a simple system is likely to cost at least £12,000, plus £3,500 annual monitoring and maintenance cost. Motion sensor alarm systems may be more cost-effective.

In some cases, less sophisticated monitored CCTV (costing around £4,000) has proved to be effective as a deterrent, as have others where cameras simply watch vehicular approaches and record vehicle number plates. Be aware that if thieves are climbing on the roof and the cameras are accessible, they might steal the cameras as well as the lead.

Before installing any scaffold it is important to check your building insurance policy. Some policies have clauses that specifically exclude cover for roofing materials whilst scaffolding is in place, even if the work being done has nothing to do with the roof. This makes it even more important to protect the scaffolding in order to prevent theft.

Alarms

Alarm signalling can be automatically linked to a 24 hour manned alarm receiving centre, or directed to the telephones or mobiles of appointed keyholders.

Bells/sirens on their own may be effective in built-up areas, where a reasonable level of surveillance can be expected. Additionally, the alarm could activate a flashing floodlight. This approach will require a good level of community participation and is not suitable for isolated sites.

Whatever system is used, congregations are advised that all keyholders need to be briefed by their neighbourhood policing team on their appropriate response so that they do not put themselves at risk in responding to the alarm.

Alarm systems should be installed and maintained by an NSI or SSAIB approved company. To find details of approved companies in your area visit www.nsi.org.uk and www.ssaib.org

It may be possible for the contractor to be responsible for cover during the works. The cost will still be passed on to the congregation, but the responsibility to find an insurer and meet the standards of site security will then rest with the contractor.

As well as intruder alarm protection on the scaffolding, the following precautions will also help reduce the risk of thefts from roofs:

Only erect scaffolding where it is needed for any particular phase of work. Phased scaffolding reduces the vulnerability of the whole building.

Bolt corrugated iron sheeting or solid timber boarding around the base of the scaffold to a height of 3.5m to deter climbers.

Remove all ladders to a secure point at the close of work each day. If, for some exceptional reason it is necessary to leave a ladder in place, make sure protective sheeting is securely locked or fixed in place, overlapping the sides of the ladder as well as the rungs up to a height of 3m.

Remove all old lead or copper from the site at the end of the day. Only bring enough new material for each day's work to the site each morning. Display notices explaining this.

Scaffolding boards put down in each bay of newly laid lead or accessible old lead, strapped down with scaffolding poles and clips at the end of each working day make it harder to remove lead and may prevent theft.

Erect Heras[®]-type fencing panels around the work site to a height of at least 2m. In some areas, where theft is prevalent, 3m or even 4m would be recommended.

Other Measures

Consider introducing lockable trap doors at each lift. Each trap door to be locked on departure from site. This would prevent access via ladders.

Advise the local police and all neighbours of building work, the name of the contractor, the times that he will be on site and who to contact if something untoward appears to be happening.

Ask church staff and volunteers, all members of the PCC, parishioners, local dog-walkers and other users of the building and its surroundings to keep it under extra surveillance whilst the works are in progress.

Consider using security patrols or manned guarding, undertaken by National Security Inspectorate (NSI) approved and licensed security personnel. For details of local NSI approved companies visit www.nsi.org.uk.