The UK Forestry Standard

The governments' approach to sustainable forestry

Forestry Commission

Scottish Forestry
Coilltearachd na h-Alba

Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
Natural Resources Wales

FOREST SERVICE

5. Forests and Historic Environment

Several thousand years of human activity have contributed to the variety of landscapes found across the UK today. Surviving elements of the historic environment take many forms, and include ancient woodland, veteran trees, earthworks, ruined structures and archaeological sites, soils and paleoenvironmental sequences. Together, these heritage features contribute to the essential character of our landscape and inform both our sense of place and our knowledge of the past.

Protecting heritage features

It is important that all significant heritage features and designated heritage assets are protected, and that consideration is given to the conservation and enhancement of historic landscapes. Forests can offer a relatively stable environment in which many heritage features survive. However, good management is needed to ensure that these features are preserved for the future and are not damaged by forest operations.

The nature and extent of many elements of the historic environment are not fully known, but information is continually being added to the record from archaeological surveys and research, and from incidental discoveries. Obtaining information and advice in regard to the historic environment to inform appropriate protection and conservation measures in forests is important. Heritage features should be identified and appropriate measures taken to protect them. Where relevant, it may be necessary to involve suitably qualified and experienced historic environment professionals to inform decisions and provide baseline evidence, particularly in advance of woodland creation. Issues raised during this process should be evidenced and considered for integration within the forest management plan.

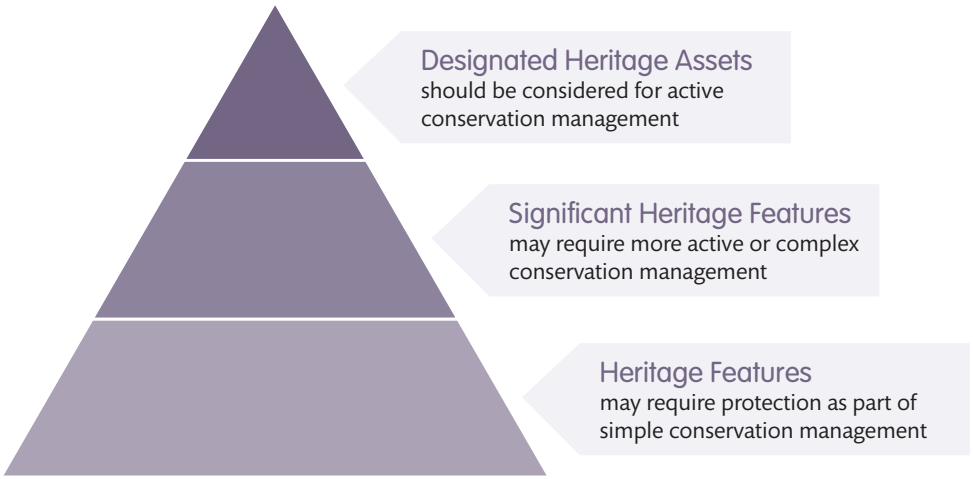
The relative importance of identified heritage features should be assessed (see Figure 5.1) and the majority retained as found, requiring simple conservation management through protection by avoiding damage or disturbance. The most significant heritage features and designated heritage assets should be considered priorities for active conservation management. Where appropriate, designated heritage assets should be managed in accordance with plans agreed with the appropriate statutory historic environment authority.

Forests containing or adjoining notable heritage features may attract many interested visitors, and opportunities to enhance or maintain public access, undertake active conservation management and consider options for interpretation should all be included within forest planning.

Obtaining information and advice

Effective and accurate information is required to properly manage the historic environment. Obtaining new information (e.g. by commissioning an archaeological survey) may be required to assess the impact of any proposal and determine whether any design or operational modifications are necessary.

Figure 5.1 The relative importance of identified heritage features.



The appropriate archaeological response depends on the detail of the proposal, the terrain in question and the quality of the existing information base. The information gathered should influence the design of forests and forestry activities to ensure that relevant heritage features are protected and that an appropriate record is made of any heritage features that could be lost because of operational activities.

To protect relevant heritage features a range of issues need to be considered, such as providing a protective buffer area to exclude new planting and avoid any inadvertent impact. On occasion, the retention of a group of sites in a larger open area may be appropriate and consideration may also need to be given to the setting of the heritage asset. Having accurate survey information is essential during the planning phase and marking-out surveys may also be needed to confirm the strategy on the ground.

Where significant heritage features are located within existing forests, specific management operations may be required. Having detailed site location and condition information is therefore essential to enable planning and subsequent management.

Evidence of the historic environment

In cultivated agricultural landscapes, many buried archaeological remains are first identified as crop marks from aerial photographs. These images, taken from flights over several decades, have allowed an extensive monument mapping programme to be undertaken with the results incorporated into the various Historic Environment Records. The results of archaeological walkover surveys and geophysical surveys have also added to our knowledge, and heritage features and historic landscapes may be evident on historic maps.

Aerial survey techniques cannot be used in areas where there is tree cover. As a result, many existing records do not extend to forests, which, in comparison with open areas, have received relatively scant field study. The lack of widespread detailed surveys means that many heritage features in forests are unknown or not recorded, and that they are therefore at greater risk of accidental damage. However, recent progress in using new remote sensing

techniques such as Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR; airborne laser scanning), is contributing new data to the records.

The need for detailed archaeological survey will depend on a number of factors. It will not be necessary to commission an archaeological walkover survey for every existing or potential forestry site. A visual survey, together with reference to existing records, will help reveal any obvious evidence and determine whether further investigation is warranted. A visual survey will also identify extant features of historical interest, including long established boundaries such as ancient rides, walls, banks and hedgerows, and veteran trees and features associated directly with forest management. Forestry practitioners are encouraged to make themselves aware of the common types of historical evidence and to record the location of features of interest that they may find.

Archaeological survey

When a specialist archaeological survey is required, it is most appropriate for this to be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced historic environment professional. Prior to any work commencing, a method statement should be agreed between the forest manager, the historic environment professional undertaking the works and forestry authority staff or the Local Historic Environment Service (which may be referred to as the local or regional curatorial service). This method statement should detail:

- the area of ground to be covered and the nature of the terrain;
- the techniques to be used, including the standards to be complied with;
- the timescales and resources needed for completing the study;
- the required format and scope of results and reports.

There are several established techniques that are used to determine and identify heritage features. Some of these allow the remote detection of sites (such as aerial photography and LiDAR), while others are used to make a more detailed record of upstanding surviving earthworks and structures (such as archaeological survey).

Assessing an area deemed to be archaeologically sensitive usually requires a combination of techniques appropriate to the previous land use and potential archaeology that may be encountered. Commonly used techniques are:

- Desk-based assessment: the identification of known or potential heritage features through the examination of relevant Historic Environment Records, and sources such as historic maps, aerial photography and the results of LiDAR surveys.

- Prospective survey: a survey undertaken to locate and define upstanding heritage features. Surveys can take a variety of forms: the targeted inspection and definition of known sites; the prospective survey of ground of high archaeological potential to locate previously unidentified sites; and the comprehensive inspection of all ground covered by a proposal.

- **Protective and detailed survey:** a survey undertaken to support agreed design solutions such as: a final walkover survey to mark out relevant heritage features within the proposal and fully check the area identified for planting; or a detailed archaeological measured survey to provide a baseline record of the heritage feature or historic landscape.

The results from a combination of desk-based assessment and prospective survey will significantly enhance the Historic Environment Record for a study area, providing an excellent evidence base for land management. This enables all future planting and management proposals to be integrated with the historic environment, with significant heritage features avoided (or retained in open areas). Advice on the design of any programme of historic environment works can usually be provided by the local historic environment service.

UKFS Requirements for Forests and Historic Environment

Scheduled Monuments

The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 in Great Britain, Historic Environment Scotland Act 2014, Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016, and Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 provide the legal basis for designating Scheduled Monuments in the UK. Consent is required from the relevant statutory historic environment authority for most works within a Scheduled Monument and for any that have the potential to damage or disturb the monument. Undertaking unauthorised works or causing damage to a Scheduled Monument is an offence and can lead to criminal prosecution.

Scheduled Monuments must not be damaged or disturbed, and consent must be obtained from the relevant statutory historic environment authority for any works that have the potential to damage or disturb the monument.

Archaeological finds

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland there is a legal requirement to report treasure finds, which are carefully defined under the Treasure Act 1996. In Scotland there is a legal requirement to report all archaeological finds under the Treasure Trove system and only disclaimed finds can be legally acquired. In each country there are regulations affecting the use of metal detectors. Throughout the UK, it is illegal to use a metal detector on, or to remove any archaeological finds from, a Scheduled Monument without the permission of the statutory historic environment authority. There is also the Portable Antiquities Scheme, to which chance discoveries of archaeological artefacts outside an archaeological context should be reported.

In Scotland, *Crimen Violati Sepulchre* (violation of sepulchre) means that sites with the confident potential to contain buried human skeletal material are protected, and any accidental discovery of human remains (however old) must be reported. Similarly, in England and Wales, accidental discoveries of human remains must be reported; human remains on un-consecrated ground are protected by the Burial Act 1857 and a licence to disturb or remove these is required from the Ministry of Justice.

The relevant authorities must be informed if discoveries are made that come within the scope of the laws covering archaeological finds and human remains. Metal detectors must not be used where legally restricted or on a Scheduled Monument. Human remains must not be disturbed without prior permission.

Listed buildings and structures

When a historic building or structure is listed, it is placed on a statutory list of buildings and structures of special architectural or historic interest. These lists are compiled by the statutory historic environment authority in each country. From an owner's or manager's perspective, the listed building or structure cannot be altered, damaged or demolished without obtaining the necessary consent from the relevant national or local authority.

Repairs that exactly match the existing structure may not need consent, but the local planning authority will advise, as the impact and effect of any repairs is not always straightforward.

Listed building consent must be sought and obtained from the local planning authority to demolish a listed building or structure or any part of it, or to alter it in any way which would affect its character, inside or out.

Protection of Military Remains

All military aircraft crash sites in the UK, its territorial waters, or British aircraft in international waters, are controlled sites under the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986.

It is an offence under the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986 to tamper with, damage, move or unearth any items at such sites, unless the Ministry of Defence has issued a licence authorising such activity. Anyone seeking to recover a military aircraft or excavate a military aircraft crash site is required to obtain a licence from the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre, part of the Defence Business Services, Ministry of Defence.

Historic landscape character

The historic environment shapes the character of our landscapes. It also reveals how communities adapted to ongoing climate, economic and technological change. There are many historical and cultural associations with particular places, different land uses and individual heritage features, and these associations can bring a cultural dimension to the value of historic landscape character. Policies have been developed to reflect the importance of historic character and protect important landscapes. Some areas have special designations, such as being registered parks and gardens, and some may have locally specific policies that apply in addition to those accompanying the designation.

In some situations, woodland creation can enhance or develop the historic character of the landscape, but in others this may be inappropriate. Where existing forests were planted with little attention to the historic landscape, felling and restocking (or regeneration) presents an opportunity to reassess their design; this is especially the case where previously unrecorded heritage features have since been identified. In many parts of the UK there are projects identifying the historic character of landscapes that can help inform decisions about a proposed change.

Forests should be designed and managed to take account of the historic character and cultural values of the landscape.

Forests should be designed and managed to take account of policies associated with World Heritage Sites (and their buffer areas), historic landscapes, battlefield sites, Conservation Areas, historic parks and gardens and designed landscapes.

Where forest creation or substantial forest management is proposed within registered parks and gardens, the relevant Gardens Trust should be consulted as well as the statutory historic environment authority.

Heritage features

The primary responsibility for land managers is to ensure that heritage features receive appropriate protection and are not accidentally damaged. This will involve the identification and assessment of sites, and the inclusion of designated heritage assets and significant heritage features as part of the forest management plan. A range of measures can then be set out in operational plans to ensure that features are protected and that suitable conservation management is considered. Designated heritage assets and significant heritage features with an appropriate conservation option and added value in terms of wider sustainable forest management should be considered priorities for action. Social opportunities and environmental constraints should also be considered.

Heritage features are not confined to archaeological sites and include a range of features of local significance, such as relict field systems and veteran trees. The relative importance of identified heritage features will need to be assessed on an individual site basis. Information and advice to support the development and design of the forest management plan can usually be provided by the local historic environment service and/or a suitably qualified and experienced historic environment professional.

Steps should be taken to ensure that heritage features, which may be adversely affected by forestry, are known and assessed on an individual site basis, checking Historic Environment Records and obtaining information and advice where appropriate.

Forest management plans and operational plans should set out how designated heritage assets, significant heritage features and woodland heritage such as veteran trees are to be protected and managed, and should clearly show their location and extent.

UKFS Guidelines on Historic Environment

Historic landscape context

The long history of human settlement and land use in the UK has left a legacy of varied landscapes rich in historical and cultural values. The vast majority of natural tree cover was cleared to provide land for other uses and, at a broad scale, the geomorphology of an area dictated where activities such as quarrying, mining, agriculture or forestry would have been the predominant land use. Features such as burial mounds, hillforts and farmsteads indicate a history of open land, whereas features such as saw-pits or charcoal platforms indicate a woodland history.

Ancient woodland, parkland and wood pasture will all have a long history of woodland culture associated with them – although the historical use of the term 'forest' was misleading as it was often used to describe a hunting area, irrespective of tree cover, in ancient hunting forests. Cultural values are often linked to historical uses and may include designed landscapes, cultural associations, or areas imbued with social history, such as the crofting landscapes of Scotland.

Projects to understand the historic development of landscapes, rather than individual special sites, have been undertaken across the UK. Examples include Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) in England and Wales, and Historic Land-use Assessment (HLA) in Scotland. These projects examine the origins of land-use patterns and map them in areas of similar character to provide a basis for guiding land-use policies. They can also contribute the historical element to a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA).

The most important historic and designed landscapes are entered onto registers of landscapes of historic and design interest and some of the most sensitive historical areas have been identified in indicative forestry strategies, regional forestry frameworks and local forest management plans.

There is popular interest in landscape history, and this can present opportunities: for example, in generating support for proposals to restore woodland cover on sites that were wooded in the recent past. First-series ordnance survey, other early maps and old aerial photographs (e.g. the RAF stereoscopic cover produced from the late 1940s) provide useful sources of information and can help show how the landscape has developed over time and how the woodland and tree elements have changed. In some cases, tree planting may have disguised or detracted from the historical value of landscapes and there may be a case to consider removing trees to restore special sites.

1 Contact the local historic environment service for information on the historic landscape context; check to see if a historic assessment or categorisation has been undertaken, or if the landscape is listed or registered as being of historic or design interest.

2 Use the historic assessment or categorisation or any description given in a historic register or list, together with a Landscape Character Assessment, to inform the development of proposals.

Consider the impacts of forestry on the historical context and landscape character in forest management plans; consider opportunities to complement, enhance or re-create landscapes of historic interest.

Forest planning

Obtaining information and advice in regard to the historic environment to inform protection and conservation measures in forests is important. Where heritage features are newly identified in a desk-based assessment, or where there is potential for unknown heritage features but information is lacking, a more detailed prospective survey may need to be commissioned. This is particularly relevant in upland areas and in areas of previously unimproved agriculture. However, for many sites, records may already exist, and a useful starting point in identifying this information is the various Historic Environment Records. Advice to support the development and design of the forest management plan can usually be provided by the local historic environment service or can be commissioned from a suitably qualified and experienced historic environment professional.

Consideration of the historic environment should precede any new planting on an area of ground previously unplanted with trees. However, there are different levels of response required, depending upon the conditions. A professional archaeological survey may be required in some situations while a desk-based assessment may suffice in others. Unimproved or upland areas such as upland moorland and pasture may be more likely to require field survey, and advice should be sought from the local historic environment service.

Consideration of the historic environment should also precede any harvesting and restocking operations. However, there are levels of response appropriate to different conditions. A professional archaeological survey may be considered appropriate in some cases, such as in previously unimproved areas, ancient and semi-natural woodland and areas with a high density of heritage features, as the likelihood of unknown sites being found is much higher.

It will not be necessary to conduct a full historic environment survey for every existing forest or potential woodland creation site, particularly in areas of previously improved agriculture. A visual survey, together with reference to existing records, will help reveal any obvious evidence and determine whether further investigation is warranted. A visual survey will also identify extant features of historic interest, for example, long established boundaries such as ancient rides, walls, banks and hedgerows, and woodland heritage features such as veteran trees associated directly with woodland management. Forestry practitioners are encouraged to make themselves aware of the common types of historical evidence and to record the location of features of interest they come across.

The process for integrating the historic environment into the forest management plan involves collecting and analysing all relevant information, including the historical context and evidence of the historic environment resource. In some situations, evidence of the historic environment will be compelling and forestry may be inappropriate. However, where features or areas of interest have been identified within a forest area, it will often be appropriate to safeguard them as an area of open space within a forest management plan.

As a guide, a margin of at least 20 m should be identified and maintained around designated heritage assets such as Scheduled Monuments and other significant heritage features, but this will depend on the site itself. There is a presumption against restocking (or allowing regeneration) on designated heritage assets and significant heritage assets. Linear features such as ancient rides, walls, banks and hedgerows, and woodland heritage features such as veteran trees, may not justify such a large buffer area, but they can be identified for protection in the forest management plan and operational plans.

Growing short rotation forestry or coppice crops on agricultural land to provide a source of woodfuel is of increasing interest, but the practice can pose threats to the historic environment. Species such as willow have a high water demand that can affect waterlogged archaeology. In addition, these crops may eventually be removed by a deep cultivation process, which can disrupt or destroy buried historic environment evidence.

The setting of designated heritage assets and significant heritage features may also be relevant and will need to be considered in woodland creation proposals and/or in the forest management plan. Where groups of features occur adjacent to each other, a larger area of open space is preferable to a series of smaller spaces. Where features are prominent in the landscape, or have sight lines associated with their function, then the area to be excluded from planting will need to be larger to accommodate these visual qualities. Sites where evidence suggests that significant historic environment potential may be present, but specific features have not yet been identified, also need to be identified in forest management plans.

4 Obtain information from all relevant Historic Environment Records and seek advice where appropriate to support the development and design of forest management plans from the local historic environment service and/or a suitably qualified and experienced historic environment professional.

5 Look for indications of the historic environment on the ground and conduct further investigation where evidence is found; commission archaeological surveys or seek specialist advice where there is considered to be high archaeological potential, submitting the results to the relevant Historic Environment Record.

6 Ensure those working in forests are aware of the importance of the historic environment and encourage them to recognise evidence and to assist in gathering information.

7 Integrate historic environment considerations into the forest planning process by identifying relevant heritage features and evidencing management decisions, and including long-established boundaries and woodland heritage as features to be protected.

8 Plan an appropriate area of open space around significant heritage features; for designated heritage assets such as Scheduled Monuments this will normally be a minimum of 20 m; consider the setting as well as the individual features.

9 Where archaeological evidence suggests that significant historic environment potential may be present but specific heritage features have not been defined, identify these areas in forest management plans and, if appropriate, restrict any planting to smaller trees or shrubs and minimise ground disturbance.

10 Record the nature and position of any newly discovered heritage features or objects such as pottery, flint or bone, and report them to the relevant local historic environment service.

11 Keep drains well away from known buried archaeological remains; where existing drains may be having a detrimental effect, consider blocking or re-routing them.

12 Take particular care to avoid heritage features where short rotation forestry or coppice crops are proposed.

Forest management and woodland heritage

Existing forests may also be part of the historic environment. Some may contain veteran trees or coppice, possibly reflecting centuries-old management traditions on the site, while others reflect more recent social and economic policies from the 20th century. Woodland heritage such as veteran trees, old coppice and pollards also need to be protected and it is important to select and manage suitable replacement trees that will eventually take their place. In particular, veteran pine and oak trees can be very important to dendrochronologists seeking to build regional reference chronologies.

Existing forest cover has often protected historical features of woodland management, such as saw-pits, boundary banks and charcoal hearths, and earlier pre-woodland uses such as farms, settlements and burial mounds. Compared with open land, and in particular arable farming, woodland can protect historical evidence from disturbance and from physical pressures such as exposure, frost and erosion. Some evidence of earlier non-woodland use can even be found in long-established ASNW. Forest cover can be vital for enhancing the historical value of features by providing them with an appropriate setting and so contributing to the sense of place.

While tree cover may have afforded some protection to the historic environment, the management of trees and shrubs on or adjacent to significant heritage features needs to be considered. Earthworks may initially be protected from erosion by the binding action of roots, but under some circumstances, roots can become disruptive and pose a threat. Damage by windblown trees can also be considerable, for example, where root plates lift and disrupt buried archaeological remains. When this occurs, it is advisable to cut the trunk and return the root plate to its original position, and to consider commissioning a professional archaeological assessment to record the damage (obtaining prior consent from the relevant statutory historic environment authority in the case of Scheduled Monuments). Smaller trees and shrubs are likely to cause less damage, and pollarding and coppicing can help restrict growth. The remains of buildings and walls are best kept free of scrub vegetation and regenerating trees, but grass or moss may have protective qualities. Occasionally trees will have grown and become firmly established in the walls of standing

structures. The tree may be holding the structure together, so removal needs to be undertaken with care and following appropriate specialist advice.

Open space within forests can provide an appropriate setting for designated heritage assets and significant heritage features. However, thought needs to be given to monitoring these areas and, if necessary, undertaking conservation management. Keeping these areas free from scrub vegetation and regenerating trees can help to preserve the features, provide physical access and capture something of the visual context and sense of place. Open space can also provide biodiversity benefits by maintaining open-ground plant and animal communities, improving forests' ecosystem services and natural capital.

A low level of browsing can be advantageous as it will discourage the encroachment of woody vegetation, particularly in wood pasture systems, but care has to be taken to ensure overgrazing does not result in erosion. This is particularly important when livestock are introduced to woodland. For example, cattle can cause poaching in areas of open ground where grazing is better, and pigs or wild boar turn over a lot of soil, so additional measures such as fencing may be required to protect the ground around individual sites. However, once grazing by livestock ceases, most open areas will start to revert to woodland through vegetation succession. Succession can take decades in areas where there is a dense grassy sward from a previous grazing regime but may be rapid where the ground is disturbed in some way – for example, by rabbits or where trees have been removed.

An alternative to grazing is mowing, cutting or flailing. Even one cut per year can help control coarse vegetation, favour low-growing ground cover species and grasses, and encourage incidental grazing. Bracken obscures features and rhizomes can disturb buried archaeological remains. Once established, it will prevent grazing and lead to vegetation succession. Repeated cutting, just when the fronds have unfurled, will help keep it in check.

Regular visits to significant heritage assets to monitor their condition will identify any new threats or damage, such as a new badger sett in an earthen barrow, a canopy gap that could lead to windblow or increased scrub growth, or excessive recreational activities causing erosion on the ramparts of a hillfort. A useful method of monitoring is to keep a photographic record that includes the date of inspection. Statutory historic environment agencies may be able to offer condition monitoring of scheduled monuments and follow up management advice.

13 Manage woodland heritage such as veteran trees, old coppice and pollards; where appropriate, select and manage suitable replacement trees that will eventually take their place.

14 Manage trees and shrubs that may damage designated heritage assets and significant heritage features in existing forests; where appropriate, limit the establishment of scrub vegetation, rhododendron and regenerating trees and consider removing large trees vulnerable to windthrow.

15 Aim to maintain the open settings for designated heritage assets and significant heritage features; where appropriate, monitor changes in vegetation and consider using grazing or mowing as part of the management plan; where grazing does take place, monitor its impact on the condition of relevant heritage features.

16 Monitor designated heritage assets and significant heritage features, including woodland heritage, to check they are not being damaged or degraded.

17 Manage public access so that designated heritage assets and significant heritage features are not subject to erosion or damage caused by visitor pressure or excessive recreational activities.

Forestry operations

Forestry operations and civil engineering activities involve heavy machines and occasionally earth-moving equipment. These activities can destroy or damage heritage features and buried archaeological remains, while even the close proximity of machines presents risks of physical damage, soil vibration, compaction and erosion.

Ground disturbance may be required for tree establishment, and operations involving deep cultivation, scarification and drainage can all destroy buried archaeological remains. The construction of roads, trails, paths and car parks all involve earth moving, and quarries are frequently opened to provide materials. Other engineering works can involve modifying watercourses and the construction of drains and other structures such as bridges. The felling and extraction of timber usually involves large harvesting machines and sometimes a winch to drag heavy loads of timber. In addition, some habitat restoration projects involve considerable ground disturbance, such as pulling out tree stumps and inverting soil layers to reduce the surface nutrient content. As with any soil disturbance, this can have potentially damaging consequences and the possible effect on heritage features and buried archaeological remains needs to be considered before proposals are finalised.

The first stage in protecting a site is to identify all known elements of the historic environment, including woodland heritage features such as veteran trees, in the forest management plan. The plan should include both the location and extent of all designated heritage assets and significant heritage features. This information, together with any more detail provided by site examination, can be transferred to a site-level operational plan when operations are proposed. The operational plan sets out how site works are to be organised, together with measures to avoid damaging relevant heritage features. Where there are designated heritage assets and significant heritage features, advice should be sought from the statutory historic environment authority and local historic environment service. Obtaining consent is a legal requirement where operations may affect a Scheduled Monument. This liaison process can take time and will need to be planned in advance.

The historic environment is particularly vulnerable to unintentional damage during site operations. It is important to ensure that all those working on site understand why measures are in place and how best to avoid damage. The final stage in the planning process is to mark out relevant heritage features on the ground – ensuring that site workers are fully

aware of the operational constraints. In addition to the operations themselves, heritage features will also need to be protected from incidental activities such as the stacking of timber or storage of other materials on site. Where operations are necessary near to heritage features, measures can be taken to ensure the impacts are minimised. These include limiting work to periods of dry weather, planning racks and extraction routes in advance, and protecting the ground with brash mats. Low-impact harvesting and extraction methods, such as felling by hand, extraction by winch, or by using horses, may also help minimise site impacts under some circumstances. Felling and thinning should be planned to minimise the risk of consequent windblow affecting heritage features in the vicinity.

Steps can also be taken to lessen future impacts and improve management options, for example, by thinking carefully about the position of fence lines and the provision of access routes to features.

18 If operations are planned near a designated heritage asset such as a Scheduled Monument, consult the relevant statutory historic environment authority before site operations commence; if operations are likely to affect other significant heritage features, seek advice on operations from the local historic environment service.

19 Identify relevant heritage features in the operational plan and identify them on the ground; ensure they are excluded from the operational area and that the plan is communicated to all those working on site.

20 Where operations near heritage features are a necessity, or it is desirable to remove trees from them, take precautions to avoid damage and take particular care with felling and extraction.

21 Avoid heritage features when planning areas for storing material, stacking timber or as a parking area for machinery.

Access and interpretation

Forests often have an interesting history that enhances the contribution they make to society. There is considerable public interest in cultural heritage and the historic environment and interpretation of these aspects of forests can provide a focus for visitors. This may be as part of a wider access or recreation strategy or an informal opportunity to appreciate a specific heritage feature.

The history of an individual wooded area is often wide ranging and can include heritage features associated with previous land uses, as well as the management of the forest itself. Evidence of past land use may include the remains of agricultural fields and farms, prehistoric burial mounds, settlements and fortifications. The history of woodland management might be linked to the establishment of a strategic timber reserve, the iron industry, shipbuilding, hunting or some other impetus for the use of woods. The ancient woodland, veteran trees, historic parklands, wood pasture and coppice woodlands that we see in the landscape today all have a story to tell. Some woods contain features that span several thousands of years of history.

Heritage features can sometimes be linked by paths and trails, and explained using interpretative panels, leaflets and maps. However, such facilities need to be managed to avoid negative impacts on the heritage features or the surrounding area. For example, increased visitor numbers may lead to an increased risk of erosion. Monitoring and, where necessary, mitigating action, will be required to ensure that heritage features and visitor facilities remain of a good standard. For example, paths may need to be re-routed and interpretation boards relocated to remove risks to sensitive locations.

22 Consider providing access to heritage features of significant cultural and historical interest.

23 Consider how relevant heritage features could be interpreted for visitors as part of an integrated access strategy.

24 Ensure that relevant heritage features and any visitor facilities associated with them are well maintained.