thp buildings at risk

South Downs National Park Authority
Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas
Buildings at Risk Survey 2012/13

An overview of the current risk, condition and occupancy profiles of the Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas of the South Downs National Park

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Introduction

During the winter of 2012/13 a Buildings at Risk Survey was carried out across the full area of the South Downs National Park. The survey involved the assessment of over 5000 listed buildings and a further 4400 unlisted buildings in conservation areas. The assessment comprised an external inspection, in which the overall condition and occupancy of the building were recorded, together with further information on the condition and materials for key building elements.

The information gained during the survey was used to make risk assessments for all buildings and structures. In addition, a more detailed assessment, the Heritage Asset Assessment (HAA) methodology, was applied, as this allows a more targeted approach to assessing the defect patterns within the buildings and the action required.

The survey field work proceeded well despite, at times, poor weather. The vast majority of building occupiers and owners cooperated fully with the survey and over 99% of all buildings were subjected to a full assessment.

2012/13 Key Statistics – Listed Buildings

Buildings at Risk – 1.48% (87 buildings)

Vulnerable Buildings - 4.56% (267 buildings)

Not at Risk Buildings – 93.96% (5507 buildings)

Fully Occupied - 89.11%

Partly Occupied – 2.00%

Vacant – 1.25%

Structures – 7.64%

East Sussex Area – 1.05% At Risk

West Sussex Area – 1.53% At Risk

Hampshire Area – 1.57% At Risk

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Overview

Levels of risk and vulnerability across the National Park are extremely low. Over the last 15 years The Handley Partnership has carried out Buildings at Risk surveys in many parts of the United Kingdom (this work amounts to over 50,000 individual inspections) and, for a mixed rural and urban area such as that encompassed by the National Park, levels of risk as low as those seen in the park have not been seen before. This reflects the very high demand for properties and long-standing pressures for redevelopment of buildings across much of the park area.

2012/13 Risk Profile		
Risk Assessment	**%**	**Number**
At Risk	1.48	87
Vulnerable	4.56	267
Not at Risk	93.96	5507

Analysis of Risk Status of Listed Buildings
2012/13 Survey

List Grade	At Risk		Vulnerable		Not at Risk	
	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number
I	0.65	1	1.95	3	97.40	150
II*	1.29	3	3.02	7	95.69	222
II	1.50	82	4.69	257	93.81	5135
All Grades	**1.48**	**87**	**4.56**	**267**	**93.96**	**5507**

Analysis of Condition Profile of Listed Buildings
2012/13 Survey

List Grade	Very Bad		Poor		Fair		Good	
	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number
I	0	0	0.65	1	25.32	39	74.03	114
II*	0	0	1.29	3	25.00	58	73.71	171
II	0.20	11	1.70	93	29.25	1601	38.85	3769
All Grades	**0.19**	**11**	**1.67**	**98**	**28.97**	**1698**	**69.17**	**4054**

Analysis of Occupancy Profile of Listed Buildings
2012/13 Survey

List Grade	Vacant		Partly Occupied		Fully Occupied		Structure	
	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number
I	0	0	1.95	3	90.91	140	7.14	11
II*	0.86	2	4.74	11	92.67	215	1.72	4
II	1.30	71	1.88	103	88.91	4867	7.91	433
All Grades	**1.25**	**73**	**2.00**	**117**	**89.11**	**5223**	**7.64**	**488**

Risk Status

Although the stock of listed buildings across the park is large, the survey shows that the number which are at risk or vulnerable is relatively small. It follows from this that a targeted approach to dealing with these buildings should be manageable. That said, it must be faced that, given the fact that some of the normal economic factors leading to the decline in building condition or occupancy are not as prevalent in this area as in some, those buildings which still remain at risk or vulnerable may present significant issues.

Although the number of buildings at risk is small, the additional group which are vulnerable must also be considered. If all efforts were concentrated into the buildings and risk alone, there is a high likelihood that as some buildings are recovered, further ones will slip into the at risk category from the vulnerable group. Therefore, application of the HAA scoring system to determine any list of buildings for action is appropriate. This is likely to give more effective results in the longer term.

Condition Profile

The condition profile shows that almost 70 per cent of the buildings and structures are in good condition. There is still a significant proportion requiring at least some attention. In general, this attention relates to maintenance of exposed and secondary elements such as windows, rainwater goods, rooflights and chimneys. It was also noted that there is a significant proportion of the buildings within the park which have thatched roofs. This type of roof covering tends to have a lower life than some other materials and it was seen that, at the current time, in excess of 20% of such roof coverings require at least some attention.

Occupancy Profile

Building occupancy levels across the National Park are very high. This again reflects the high demand for domestic properties. Many of the building types which would tend to suffer from low occupancy levels such as agricultural buildings are not present in the stock at the level which would be expected due to conversion to domestic or commercial use. Indeed, well over 50% of the original agricultural buildings within the park area are now used for non-agricultural purposes. This does, of course, increase overall occupancy levels and reduce levels of risk, but it does reduce the variations within the historic fabric of the area.

Defects & Rate of Change

Application of the HHA scoring system allows predictions to be made regarding the likely rate of change of building condition and patterns of defects present. The tables clearly show the variation of these distributions for the buildings considered to be at risk, vulnerable or not at risk. For those buildings considered to be not at risk, the majority show little or no decline, whilst those which are have some rate of decline are seeing very slow changes.

Potential Rate of Change ***(from HAA Assessment)***

Rate of Change Statement	Not at Risk	Vulner-able	At Risk
No significant decline	63.34	3.00	0.00
Little or no decline	14.44	13.48	3.45
Very slow rate of decline	13.73	11.99	1.15
Slow rate of decline	7.35	38.58	6.90
Medium-term action required	0.62	11.24	4.60
Short-term action required	0.53	21.72	40.23
Rapid decline likely	0.00	0.00	21.84
Rate of decline may increase	0.00	0.00	13.79
Complete loss possible	0.00	0.00	8.05

The distribution shows that for these buildings there may be some slight degree of maintenance deficit, but that this is minor and relates to non-structural elements. The vulnerable buildings are, for the most part, at the current time undergoing very slow or slow rates of decline. The main reason for vulnerability appears to be a more long-standing backlog of maintenance work. Over time this backlog will tend to have a more significant effect on the buildings, but given the slow rate of decline there is ample opportunity for intervention to stop these buildings becoming at risk. As would be expected, all of at risk buildings require some intervention. 40% require action in the short term. Whilst some at risk buildings can be considered to be structurally unsound, the proportion of such buildings is low. The distribution clearly suggests that the buildings which are at risk have fallen into this category, in general, through a lack of maintenance and use over a considerable period. Whilst this does not mean that the works required to recover them will be minor, it does mean that in almost all cases it should be achievable.

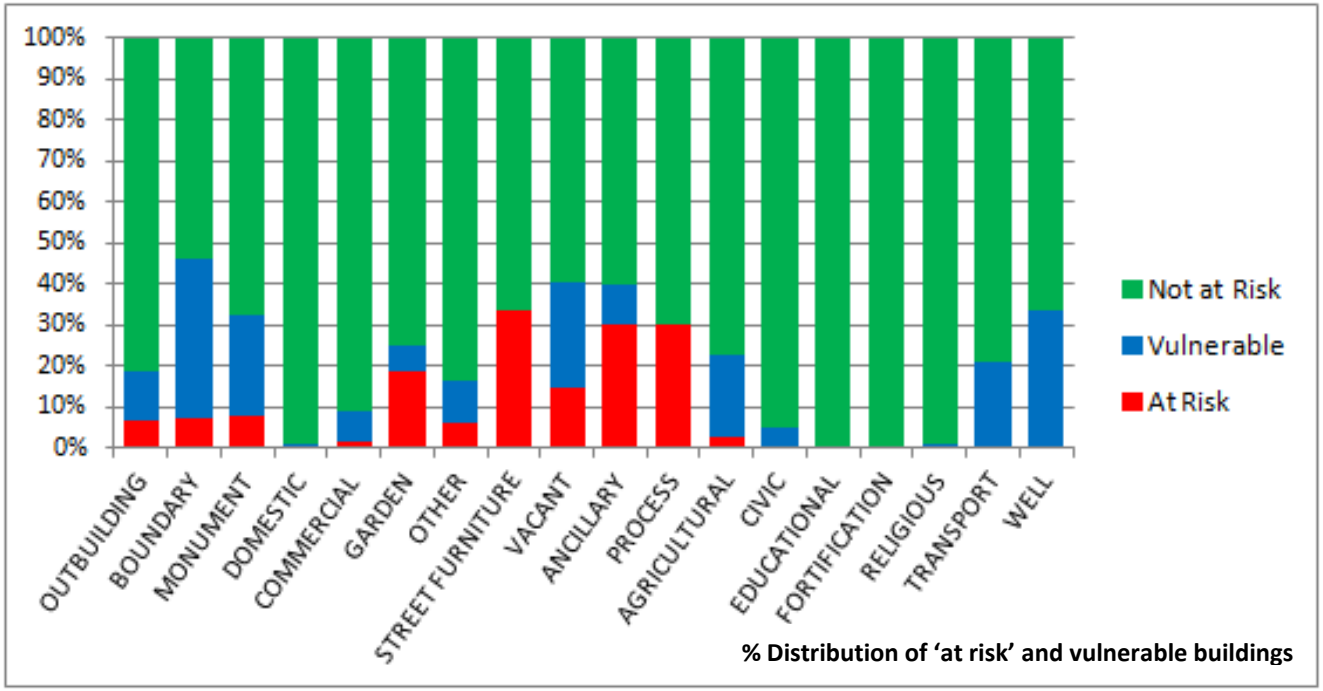
Defect Category Assessment ***(from HAA Assessment)***

Defect Category	At Risk	Vulnerable	Not at Risk
No significant work required	0.00	3.00	63.34
Secondary item maintenance required	3.49	13.48	14.44
Reduced maintenance levels	1.16	11.99	13.73
Maintenance backlog building up	6.98	38.58	7.35
Serious lack of maintenance	8.14	8.61	0.67
Ongoing decline	13.95	7.49	0.29
Full refurbishment required	3.49	6.37	0.11
Major repairs to many items required	19.77	10.49	0.07
Very poor condition overall	17.44	0.00	0.00
Critical items require replacement	13.95	0.00	0.00
Structurally unsound	8.14	0.00	0.00

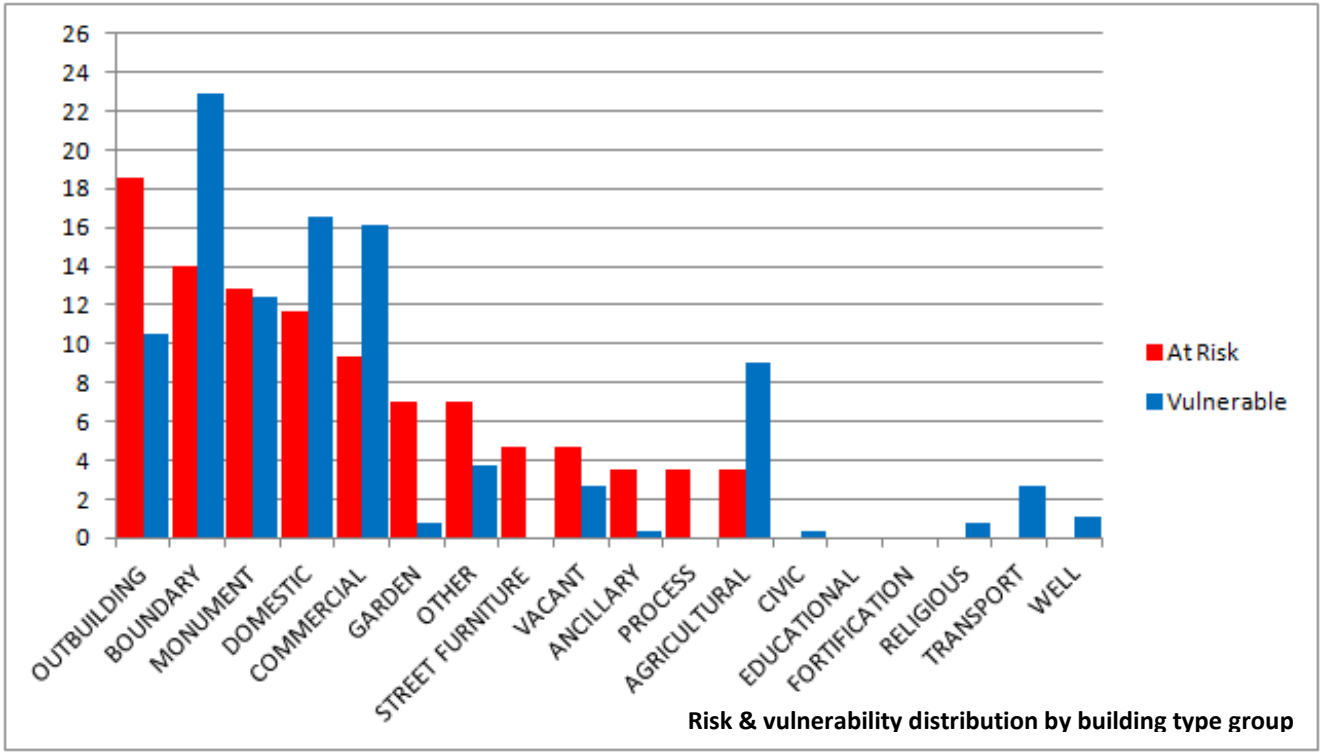
Building Types

Risk and vulnerability is not divided equally among all buildings types. Given the economic activity and pressures for development within the area, as would be expected, those buildings with the highest perceived value have the lowest levels of risk and vulnerability.

Groups having the highest levels of risk and vulnerability tend to be those which are considered to be of a secondary nature, for example outbuildings, garden buildings and structures, and monuments. These building groups are not large, however. Conversely, while having a low proportion of at risk and vulnerable buildings, some of the larger groups such as domestic and commercial buildings do make up a significant part of the overall number of buildings at risk or vulnerable.



% Distribution of 'at risk' and vulnerable buildings



Risk & vulnerability distribution by building type group

Geographic Distribution

The survey data can be analysed according to a number of geographic groupings. The database allows selection of buildings by parish, district council area and county council area.

Overall, the variation between such areas tends to increase as the areas reduce in size. At the county boundary level, while there are variations, these are relatively minor. It can be seen that the levels of risk are slightly lower in East Sussex, and the levels of vulnerability are slightly higher in Hampshire. The defect profiles for each of the county areas are very similar. In Hampshire, there is evidence of a higher level of maintenance backlog, while in East Sussex there is evidence of a slight increase in a reduction in overall maintenance levels. Occupancy levels in the county areas are again relatively similar. West Sussex has the highest level of vacancy, perhaps reflecting the nature of the buildings in this large central area. The level of partial occupancy is very similar across all areas.

Observation of the risk availability profiles for the district council boundary areas again shows broad consistency. Further information with regard to this is available in the full summary report.

Analysis of Risk Status of Listed Buildings by County Areas
(includes data for main counties only)

County Area	At Risk (%)		Vulnerable (%)		Not at Risk (%)	
	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num
East Sussex	1.05	15	4.01	57	94.94	1351
West Sussex	1.53	42	4.09	112	94.38	2585
Hampshire	1.57	26	5.62	93	92.81	1536

% Occupancy Assessment by County Area

Occupancy Category (excludes structures)	County Area		
	East Sussex	West Sussex	Hampshire
Vacant	0.99	1.66	0.94
Partly Occupied	2.21	2.24	1.95
Fully Occupied	96.79	96.09	97.1

% Defect Category Assessment by County Area

Defect Category	County Area		
	East Sussex	West Sussex	Hampshire
No significant work required	60.22	61.48	56.07
Reduced maintenance levels	14.48	12.96	13.72
Maintenance backlog building up	7.10	8.14	11.18
Secondary item maintenance building up	15.74	14.31	12.87
Serious lack of maintenance	0.63	0.88	2.05
Major repairs required to many items	0.56	0.47	1.57
Ongoing general decline	0.42	0.99	0.85
Very poor general condition	0.07	0.29	0.42
Full refurbishment required	0.42	0.15	0.91
Structurally unsound	0.07	0.11	0.12
Some critical items require replacement	0.21	0.18	0.18
Many items require replacement	0.07	0.04	0.06

Non-Traditional Materials

Over recent years there has been a developing view that the use of non-traditional materials *(e.g. UPVC windows and doors, artificial slate roof tiles, etc.)* in listed buildings may be increasing.

To give a way of assessing the magnitude of any problem which may exist, a new indicator - the 'Non-Traditional Material Index' (NTMI) - has been developed. This uses information gained during the five-yearly Buildings at Risk Surveys to give a two-part indicator for, firstly, the proportion *(generally stated in % terms)* of buildings in any defined group which have non-traditional materials and, secondly, a score to show the average extent of such materials in a group *(e.g. buildings with both UPVC windows and doors would have a higher extent score than those with UPVC windows only).*

The NTMI distribution table shows how the incidence of non-traditional materials varies between each of the county areas. From this it can be seen that there are significant differences in the overall score, but less difference in the degree score. That said, in all cases, the NTMI score is low. This shows that the use of non-traditional materials in the listed buildings across the National Park is not the widespread problem it often can be. Close inspection of the data shows that rather than being widespread, there is a low use of non-traditional materials. However, where they do appear, they tend to be in clusters, perhaps reflecting the policies of a particular building owner or reflecting the 'contagiousness' of such alterations. This is further confirmed by observation of the data relating to the settlement type descriptions. The data can be interrogated further to identify those buildings or areas with high NTMI scores, allowing targeting of any appropriate action.

Non-Traditional Material Analysis (NTMI) 2011

Area	NTMI Assessment		NTMI Area / NTMI NP	
	Score[1]	Degree[2]	Score	Degree
East Sussex	1.827	1.000	0.923	0.892
West Sussex	1.825	1.180	0.922	1.05
Hampshire	2.175	1.139	1.099	0.980
National Park	**1.979**	**1.121**		
Urban	**2.062**			
Town & Fringe	**1.491**			
Village & Isolated	**2.055**			

1 - % of buildings in group with some non-traditional materials
2 – Measure of average proportion of non-traditional materials in any building

Non-Traditional Material Analysis by Building Type 2011

County Area	NTMI Score[1]	
	Domestic	Commercial
East Sussex	2.067	1.587
West Sussex	2.272	0.926
Hampshire	2.931	2.174

Conservation Areas

An assessment of both the listed and unlisted buildings in over 150 of the predominantly rural conservation areas in the National Park was carried out. This is the first time that a full buildings at risk survey for all significant buildings and conservation areas has been carried out in the UK.

The table clearly shows that the level of risk and vulnerability within listed buildings in conservation areas is similar, albeit slightly lower, than for listed buildings in general. However, much lower levels of risk and vulnerability can be seen within the unlisted buildings in conservation areas, both whether they have been more recently constructed or are generally consistent with the age and type of the listed buildings in the areas.

It does not follow from this that listing has not provided some additional protection to the buildings. Instead, this reflects the fact, as noted previously, that the vast majority of the unlisted buildings in conservation areas are domestic structures of a type which may be more appropriate to their current use. Additionally, even for buildings in such areas with relevance to the original designation, alterations and element replacements over time have been freer, leading to a less significant maintenance backlog. Further analysis of these variations is required on a scale wider than that of the National Park in isolation, in order that conclusions can be drawn with regard to the best practice in terms of alteration and element changes in such areas. However, across the park as a whole, levels of risk and vulnerability within the conservation areas can be considered to be low by national standards. Where work is required, it again relates to maintenance of secondary and exposed items. There may be opportunities, in some conservation areas, to work with local communities to put in place area-wide schemes for maintenance plans such as the clearing out of gutters or the repair of other parts of buildings which may be difficult to access. Similarly, there may be opportunities to work with owners of large numbers of buildings in such areas to highlight maintenance needs.

In addition to the assessment of condition and use within the conservation areas, further assessment was made to try to identify the proportion of buildings in such areas which are of a nature consistent with the original designation. That is not to say the buildings which have been constructed since the designation are not necessarily appropriate, but it does give a method of identifying which conservation areas have seen most pressure in terms of development and alteration.

Analysis of Risk Distribution of Buildings in Conservation Areas

	Listed Buildings (%)			Unlisted buildings (%)		
Area	**At Risk (AR)**	**Vulnerable (V)**	**Not at Risk (NAR)**	**At Risk (AR)**	**Vulnerable (V)**	**Not at Risk (NAR)**
East Sussex	0.92	3.83	95.25	0.00(0.00)	0.00(0.00)	100.00(0.00)
West Sussex	0.87	3.65	95.49	0.05(0.09)	0.40(0.52)	99.55(99.39)
Hampshire	1.32	5.37	93.31	0.06(0.10)	0.72(0.95)	99.22(98.95)
National Park	**1.06**	**4.21**	**94.73**	**0.04(0.07)**	**0.47(0.61)**	**99.48(99.32)**

Figures in brackets give value for unlisted buildings in CA relevant to area designation

The full summary report accompanying the survey sets out some data on the variability of this measure. Further information can be gained from the database application.

In summary, there are significant differences between conservation areas, with some seeing between 30% and 40% of the buildings being consistent with the apparent reason for designation. In such areas isolated developments such as former local authority housing or, indeed, the way in which the boundaries were drawn have had a significant effect. Across the park as a whole, it is felt that something in the order of 83% of buildings within conservation areas fit into the criteria which the designation sought to protect, which is a relatively high value. This measure, which is available for each conservation area, may be of assistance in determining future development patterns within the areas and, indeed, may be appropriate in considering the alteration of the boundaries of some of the conservation areas.