

How to Research Heritage Assets

When identifying heritage assets for nomination onto the Local Heritage List, it is important to include as much information about the asset as you can in your nomination submission. That way the assessment panel will have a clear picture of what makes the asset significant and important.

If you're nominating an asset you know well, it may be easy to incorporate a range of supporting information and images. However, if it's somewhere you're not as familiar with you'll need to do some research into the asset's history to find information that can be used in your submission. Although researching assets can be quite a challenge sometimes, it can also be really interesting and rewarding to discover the history of a place and its surroundings, especially if you live nearby or have a connection to the area.

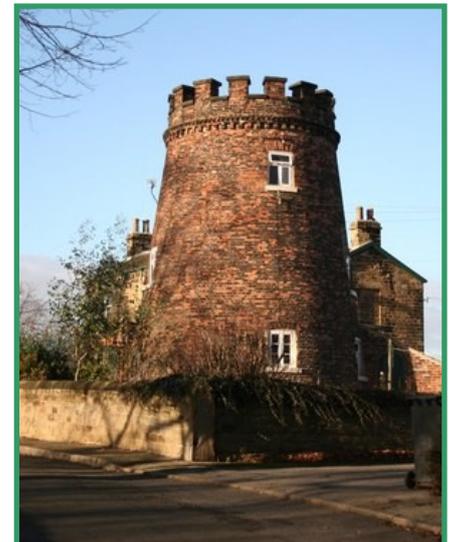
There are many ways to research heritage assets and a wide range of material available to help you find out about the history of your chosen asset. Useful information can be found in anything from historic maps to newspaper reports to archaeological excavation reports and what sources you use may depend on the type of heritage asset you're researching.

Check if the asset is already designated.

The first step in researching any asset is to find out if it is already designated, for example, listed buildings, registered parks & gardens or scheduled monuments. Sites that are designated won't be considered for Local Heritage Listing as they are already protected.

The 'Map' page on the Local Heritage List website will show assets that are nationally designated or locally listed. The national list, held by Historic England, can also be searched online at:

historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/



Locally designated assets, such as Conservation Areas, will be recorded by the relevant local council and their details found online:

Barnsley: <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/conservation/conservation-areas/>

Doncaster: <https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/planning/conservation-areas-in-doncaster>

Rotherham: <https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/planning-development/heritage-natural-environment/1>

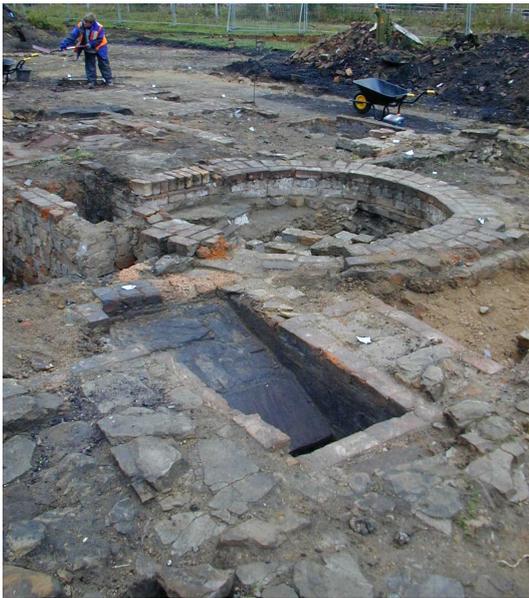
Sheffield: <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/planning-development/conservation-areas>

Local and Neighbourhood Plans can also have information on locally designated heritage assets—again these will be found online via the relevant local council.

Find out more about the type of asset you'll be nominating

Although the heritage asset you would like to nominate may be rare or unique in your area, there may be examples or parallels elsewhere in the country. By studying comparable sites or places, you may be able to find useful information relating to the style, construction, layout or materials of your asset.

Historic England have a range of *Introductions to Heritage Assets*, or (IHAs). These provide clear well-illustrated summaries of the current interpretation of particular asset types, especially those that, until now, have been little studied. IHAs fall under 4 main categories: buildings, monuments, landscapes and vessels. The IHAs can be accessed online at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/selection-criteria/ihas/>



Information on heritage assets such as archaeological sites, monuments and landscapes, can also be found online.

Information on sites recorded on the South Yorkshire Historic Environment Record (HER) can be found - using the 'more detailed search' function: https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/advanced_search.aspx.

Information on the wider historic environment of South Yorkshire can be found - using the 'what have we learnt?' page of the South Yorkshire Historic Environment Characterisation site: <http://sytimescapes.org.uk/what-have-we-learnt> (although the interactive mapping no longer functions).

Background information and research priorities, by archaeological period, can be found on the South Yorkshire Research Framework site: <https://researchframeworks.org/syrf/>.

Research Material

Information on heritage assets can be found in lots of different places, both online and in physical archives and libraries. Sources can be held on national records or local archives. Regardless of what type of heritage asset you're researching, it's worth looking at as wide a range of research material as you can, as information can sometimes be found in the most surprising of places!

Local Libraries, Archives and Sources

A good place to start looking locally is your nearest local studies/local history library and also archives. These are often located in the main library, but branches may also have local history sections. In addition to books, local studies libraries and archives hold a range of maps, newspapers and journals, business documents, census and trade directories. Although most material may not be digitised, their catalogues can be checked online before visiting.

Barnsley Archives online catalogue	http://www.calmhosting01.com/barnsley/calmview/
Doncaster Archives website	https://www.heritagedoncaster.org.uk/archives-local-studies/
Rotherham Archives online catalogue	http://archives.rotherham.gov.uk/calmview/
Sheffield Archives online catalogue	http://www2.calmview.co.uk/SheffieldArchives/CalmView/

It is also useful to look up the planning history for a building or site using the local planning authority website or the [Planning Portal](#). Previous applications may include building plans, photographs, maps or even heritage statements, which could give you some useful background information. Look at current and historic planning applications and check neighbouring properties, too, as they could hold information about the site you're researching.

Online Sources

Historic maps are a key source to consult to help get a rough idea of the date of the site and how it may have developed over time. Historic Ordnance Survey Maps date from the mid-19th century and can be very useful. They are usually available to view at your local archives, or may be accessible online via the [National Library of Scotland website](#) or at [Old-Maps - the online repository of historic maps](#). A searchable database of the earlier enclosure maps of England and Wales, giving their locations at archive repositories, is available on the [Enclosure Maps of England and Wales](#) site. There are also some private websites sharing historic maps, including Tithe maps, which might be useful, though you may be expected to pay for a subscription to view some of them, or reproduce their images.

- [Access to Archives \(A2A\)](#) is an online catalogue covering about a third of the records held by archives in England and Wales. It includes records held at more than 400 different places: at local record offices, universities, libraries, universities, museums, national institutions and other institutions.
- Historic England have an online catalogue of their photographic archive material. Previously known as Images of England, the collection of photographs is now available to view on the ['Find Photos'](#) webpage. In addition a large collection of aerial photos is available on [Britain from Above](#).



- The UK Government's official archive, known as the [National Archives](#), holds over 1,000 years of public records. Its website includes a searchable online catalogue and online guides to various topics such as wills and probate records, and census returns. It also has a helpful [research guide](#) for houses.
- The [Oxford Dictionary of National Biography](#) includes 'over 60,000 biographies, 72 million words, 11,000 portraits of significant, influential or notorious figures who shaped British history'.
- The [Victoria County History](#) collection records England's places and people from earliest times to the present day and is arranged by county and parish. The Victoria County History can be found, along with other useful sources, on the [British History Online](#) site, although not all of its content is free to view.
- Useful information can be found in both local and national newspapers, some of these can be accessed at [The British Newspaper Archive \(BNA\)](#).

Research Tips

- 📍 Make sure the information you submit is relevant to the asset you're nominating, don't include unnecessary facts and figures.
- 📍 Try to tailor the research you submit to the assessment criteria for your asset type, that way, you will find it easier to input the information on the LHLP and the assessment panel will be able to see clearly how the asset meets the criteria.
- 📍 Providing it is relevant, include as much detail as you can, as nominations without enough supporting information may be rejected.
- 📍 Reference where the information you are submitting has come from, as this will also be useful during the assessment process.
- 📍 Make sure you present your research in a clear and well ordered way - the easier it is to read, the more useful it will be.



If you have any questions or need any further information feel free to

contact us at syorks.archservice@sheffield.gov.uk

or check the Local Heritage List online platform: <https://local-heritage-list.org.uk/south-yorkshire>