Saving Hurst Castle

Following the partial collapse of Hurst Castle's East Battery, English Heritage will carry out investigations and surveys to discover how best to safeguard the castle's future.

Scheduled Monument Hurst Castle was established by Henry VIII between 1541 and 1544. Situated on the Hurst spit nearly a mile out into the Solent, it is one of the best preserved Device Forts. These medieval forts, which stretch from Hull in the north-east to Milford Haven in Pembrokeshire, were the first centrally planned system of coastal defence since Roman times.

The Hampshire fort formed a vital part of southern England's defence from the Tudor period until the mid-20th century. Its east and west batteries are testament to the audacity of Victorian engineering in the face of a challenging maritime environment.

Impacted by the pandemic and climate change

Disaster struck in 2021 when part of the castle's East Battery collapsed. Plans to address the East Battery in 2020 were delayed by the pandemic. Alongside restricted maintenances access, the pandemic also resulted in reduced visitor numbers and significant loss of income. Meanwhile, rising sea levels are increasingly impacting the castle's structural integrity.

Hurst Castle was included on the 2022 World Monuments Fund Watch, which highlights 25 heritage sites at greatest risk around the world every two years.

NHMF funding

The Hurst Castle Stabilisation Feasibility Project has received a £500,000 grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund. To establish how best to protect the castle for the long term, the project will include ground investigations, structural surveys, a 3D geomatic survey and feasibility, design and masterplanning. It will also explore opportunities for reopening full public access.

NHMF's COVID-19 Response Fund

The £500,000 funding comes from the government’s Cultural Assets Fund, which NHMF has distributed as part of our wider £40m COVID-19 Respond Fund.

Grant awarded
£500,000
Award date
20/10/2022