

Call for Evidence: Managing fire risk in London's landmark heritage buildings [October 2026]

The London Assembly Fire Committee has launched an investigation into whether the fire risk to London's landmark heritage buildings is being well managed. Specifically, it will aim to:

- Understand the key fire risks for London's landmark heritage buildings, and how the risk of a catastrophic fire in these buildings could be reduced
- Identify barriers to improving fire safety in heritage buildings in London
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the London Fire Brigade's (LFB's) fire precaution and prevention work in relation to heritage buildings in London
- Assess LFB's preparedness to respond to fires in London's heritage and historic buildings.

Below is information about the investigation and Call for Evidence, as well as key questions the Committee is interested in hearing about.

Who can submit evidence?

This Call for Evidence is open to all who would like to respond. We particularly welcome responses from owners and managers of listed and heritage buildings in London and comparable cities, other heritage sector stakeholders, individuals and organisations with expertise in heritage fire protection, including fire and rescue services and organisations representing firefighters.

Why is the Committee exploring this topic?

The London Assembly investigates issues of importance to Londoners and is the body that holds the Mayor to account.

There have been several high-profile fires in historic/heritage buildings in London in the recent past, including at Battersea Arts Centre in 2015,¹ at Grade II* listed St Mark's church in St John's Wood in 2023² and Somerset House in 2024.³ Fire can cause devastating damage to a historic building itself, as well as any priceless artefacts housed inside.

Heritage and historic buildings were designed when modern fire engineering standards did not exist. As such, they generally do not meet the requirements of current regulations. Guidance on fire safety in heritage buildings from LFB and fire heritage experts advises that protecting people from fire while preserving a buildings historic character requires "a balanced approach, taking account of both fire safety and heritage conservation."⁴

LFB has a heritage team, which offers advice on fire protection in historic buildings, and helps heritage sites develop salvage plans (which set out a plan for recovering precious items in the event of a fire). LFB also carries out training drills and exercises in partnership with historic sites in London to practice its emergency response.

¹ Guardian, [Fire severely damages Battersea Arts Centre in London](#), 13 March 2015

² BBC News, [St John's Wood: Historic church destroyed in large fire](#), 27 January 2023

³ BBC News, [Somerset House fire: Arts venue avoided 'Notre Dame disaster'](#), 24 August 2024

⁴ LFB, [Heritage Fire Risk Assessments](#), accessed 25 August 2026

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Will responses be published?

Yes, in the large majority of circumstances we will publish written submissions and the name of the individual or organisation that submitted it online. This is so that there is transparency about what evidence the Committee has received.

Exceptions to this are usually applied where there is a legal reason for non-publication or if there is a safeguarding or welfare issue. If there is a reason that you would like your evidence not to be published with your name (submitted anonymously) or to not be published (submitted confidentially), please let us know and the Committee will consider it. However, this cannot be guaranteed, and the Assembly may be required to release non-personally identifiable information if requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

What will the evidence I provide be used for?

The responses to this Call for Evidence may be used to inform recommendations to the Mayor, which will likely be in a report. These will be held as open meetings, and anyone is welcome to attend as an audience member to watch the discussion on the [Assembly webcasts page](#).

If information and/or quotations from submissions to this call for evidence are used in this output, we will cite you. We inform those who have submitted evidence about the outcome of the investigation in the form of a link to a report or output when it is published.

Where can I find your privacy notice?

The London Assembly and the GLA are committed to protecting your privacy and personal data when you contact us or submit evidence. You can find the GLA's privacy notice [here](#).

Do I need to answer all the questions?

No, you are welcome to answer the questions that are most relevant to you or your organisations and for which you have the most expertise or experience.

How do I submit evidence?

Please send evidence in a Word document format (not PDF) by email to: scrutiny@london.gov.uk

The deadline for submission is **Friday 13 November 2026**.

Key questions

1. What are the key fire risks facing London's landmark heritage buildings?
2. How is fire risk in heritage buildings in London currently managed and how effective are these arrangements?
3. Are there any barriers facing owners, managers and occupiers of heritage buildings in London in managing fire risk? How might these be overcome?

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4. What lessons might London learn from how other cities nationally and internationally manage fire risk in landmark heritage buildings?
5. How effective is LFB's work with heritage stakeholders in London in preventing, protecting and mitigating against fires? What improvements, if any, could be made?
6. How well prepared is LFB to respond to fires in London's landmark heritage buildings? What more, if anything, could be done to minimise damage when a fire occurs?

Submissions	Scrutiny@london.gov.uk Please send your submissions in a Word document format (not PDF) by Friday 13 November 2026.
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About the Committee

The Fire Committee examines matters relating to the London Fire Commissioner's priorities and objectives, and issues of wider importance to fire and rescue in London. To read more about our previous work, [please visit our website](#).

Committee Members

- Anne Clarke AM (Chair)
- Hina Bokhari OBE AM (Deputy Chair)
- Léonie Cooper AM
- Susan Hall AM
- Zack Polanski AM
- Thomas Turrell AM

Contact