The Criteria

The study of the selected site must focus on the relationship between the site, other historical sources and the aspects listed in a) to n) below. It is therefore essential that centres choose a site that allows learners to use its physical features, together with other historical sources as appropriate, to understand all of the following:

a) The reasons for the location of the site within its surroundings
b) When and why people first created the site
c) The ways in which the site has changed over time
d) How the site has been used throughout its history
e) The diversity of activities and people associated with the site
f) The reasons for changes to the site and to the way it was used
g) Significant times in the site’s past: peak activity, major developments, turning points
h) The significance of specific features in the physical remains at the site
i) The importance of the whole site either locally or nationally, as appropriate
j) The typicality of the site based on a comparison with other similar sites
k) What the site reveals about everyday life, attitudes and values in particular periods of history
l) How the physical remains may prompt questions about the past and how historians frame these as valid historical enquiries
m) How the physical remains can inform artistic reconstructions and other interpretations of the site
n) The challenges and benefits of studying the historic environment
**THE JEWEL TOWER**

Created by: ENGLISH HERITAGE LEARNING TEAM

Please provide an explanation of how your site meets each of the following points and include the most appropriate visual images of your site. Refer to your images to justify your explanation of how the site meets the criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Specifics about the site in relation to this criteria</th>
<th>Sources that can be used with this criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| a) The reasons for the location of the site within its surroundings | - The first Palace of Westminster was constructed during the reign of Edward the Confessor (r. 1042–66).  
- The Jewel Tower was built as part of the ongoing development of the original Palace of Westminster.  
- Westminster Palace was designated as the ideal location for the Jewel Tower due to its geographical convenience.  
- Its proximity to the River Thames meant that, as successive kings travelled the country and stayed at various residences, royal possessions could be easily transported as required.  
- The newly developed site was to be known as the ‘West Minster’ to distinguish it from London, a separate city lying to the east. | Sketch of about 1530 in Ashbee, J, *The Jewel Tower*, English Heritage Guidebooks (2013), p.28  
Jewel Tower history website [www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history) |
| b) When and why people first created the site | - King William I (r. 1066–86) began building Westminster Hall to help him establish Norman rule following the Norman Conquest of 1066.  
- His son, William II (r. 1087–1100), continued to develop the site which, from the 11th century, was the only royal residence to be given the title of ‘palace’: a sign of its importance and significance.  
- English monarchs continued to reside at Westminster Palace for the next few centuries, with each successive king developing and growing the Privy Palace.  
- In order to create more space for the royal household and its treasured possessions, the decision was taken to extend the Privy Palace further south and in 1365 a new tower was commissioned by the Keeper of the Privy Palace, William Usshborne: Jewel Tower.  
Map of the Palace of Westminster in about 1400 |
Separated by the King’s Garden, the Jewel Tower was an extremely secure building where the royal treasures could be stored safely. The treasures included jewels, gold and silver vessels, although items with extremely high value (such as the Crown Jewels) were kept in similarly secure buildings at the Tower of London and inside Westminster Abbey.

The ways in which the site has changed over time

- When it was first built in 1365–6, the Jewel Tower would have been one of the most secluded buildings in the medieval palace. The moat was created by 23 ditchers between 12 July and 23 August 1366 and served as an extra layer of security. It was filled with water by connecting it to the River Thames via an existing ditch at the southern arm of the moat.
- In 1600, by which time the Jewel Tower was being used to store documents, £166 13s 4d was spent on repairs and constructing a new three-storey, timber-framed house next to the tower, with the ground floor of the tower being converted into the kitchen and scullery.
- During the 17th century, further alterations were made to support the new function of the tower, including a fireproof vault being created in the smaller first-floor room, with an iron door also installed.
- In the early 18th century, the deterioration of the building was so bad that a programme of repairs and alterations was proposed.
- The proposed work was originally expected to cost £870 (approximately £74,000 today), which was a sum of money so large that it required a warrant to authorise the works signed by King George I (r.1714–27).
- The work carried out in the 18th century included:
  - reconstruction of the windows to increase their size
  - the addition of iron reinforcements and shutters on the windows for added security
  - a new, straight, brick parapet capped in Portland stone to replace the castle wall-style battlements
  - a new brick turret over the spiral staircase
  - the manufacture of new storage for the Parliamentary documents
  - a new fireplace to heat the rooms for the comfort of the Lords who would wish to consult the journals.
- The work was completed in September 1719 and exceeded the original proposal. The final cost was £1,118 (approximately £95,000 today).
- Further changes were made in 1725, with a brick wall partition added on the second floor to make a storage room and a separate clerk’s office to protect the records from the risk of fire due to the clerk’s candles and fireplace.
- In the mid 18th century, numbers 6 and 7 Old Palace Yard were built with a connecting door to the first floor of the Jewel Tower, and the lower steps at the bottom of the spiral staircase were removed.
- In 1941, the Jewel Tower was struck by incendiary bombs during the air raids of the Blitz. This resulted in the loss of the medieval timber roof.
- In 1948, the Jewel Tower was taken over by the Ministry of Works who launched a substantial conservation programme.
- Between 1954 and 1962, all the buildings on the west, north and east sides of the tower which were physically attached were demolished.


| d) How the site has been used throughout its history | The Jewel Tower was used to store royal treasure, including jewels and gold and silver vessels. The Keeper, who supervised the storage of the king’s possessions, was tasked with listing the items, providing a brief description, noting any identifying marks, and recording the weights of the items. After the departure of the royal court from Westminster Palace, the Jewel Tower was used for general storage of items such as clothes, bed linen, furniture, gaming tables, and the dolls once used by King Henry VIII’s (r.1509–47) daughters. By the end of the 16th century, ownership of the Jewel Tower had been transferred to the Clerk and Keeper of the Records of Parliament who used it to store the records of Parliament and as his own office and lodging. In the early 18th century, the first floor was at full capacity so the empty rooms above were converted to create extra space for the parchment rolls, records and journals of the House of Lords and Parliament. By the mid 19th century, the Jewel Tower was used by the Standards Department of the Board of Trade who determined the definitive values of sizes, weights and volumes for the United Kingdom and the British Empire. They installed fitted shelves on the ground floor for storage of their weighing equipment. Since 1987, the Jewel Tower has formed part of the Westminster World Heritage Site, together with the Palace of Westminster and Westminster Abbey. | 1367 Royal Treasuries inventory in Ashbee, J, *The Jewel Tower*, English Heritage Guidebooks (2013), pp.10–11 [www.english-heritageshop.org.uk/books-media/guidebook-the-jewel-tower](http://www.english-heritageshop.org.uk/books-media/guidebook-the-jewel-tower)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>e) The diversity of the activities and people associated with the site</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Jewel Tower history website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Secure storage of royal items of significance, mostly the silver plate of the royal household (1366–1600).</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history/significance">www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history/significance</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Storage of Parliamentary records (1600–1864).</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Office of the Standards Department of the Board of Trade (1869–1938).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Place in which the definitive values of sizes, weights and volumes were determined for the United Kingdom and the British Empire (1869–1938).</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Popular heritage tourism destination, part of Westminster World Heritage Site (1987).</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- King Edward III (r.1327–77): reigning monarch when the Jewel Tower was added to the Palace of Westminster.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Account of William Ussborne’s death in Ashbee, J, <em>The Jewel Tower</em>, English Heritage Guidebooks (2013), p.16 <a href="http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/content/visit/places-to-visit/history-research-plans/jewel-tower-phased-plan">www.english-heritage.org.uk/content/visit/places-to-visit/history-research-plans/jewel-tower-phased-plan</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hugh Herland: master carpenter, worked with Henry Yevele on the Jewel Tower, and later on Westminster Hall.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- William Ussborne: commissioned the building of the Jewel Tower and was Keeper of the Privy Palace (1349–68).</td>
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<tr>
<td>- William Sleaford: first Keeper of the Gold and Silver Vessels (1365–77) who supervised the contents of the Jewel Tower.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- King Henry VIII: stored some of his treasured possessions at the Jewel Tower.</td>
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<td>- Henry Elyng: Clerk of the Parliaments (1621).</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Sir Christopher Wren: eminent architect involved with surveying and repairing the Jewel Tower (1717).</td>
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<tr>
<td>- King George I: authorised the expensive works proposed to repair the Jewel Tower by signing a warrant in 1717.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- William Cowper: Clerk of the Parliaments (1716).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>f) The reasons for changes to the site and the way it was used</th>
<th>Jewel Tower phased site plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Medieval kings used Westminster Palace as a royal residence, with each successive king developing and growing the Privy Palace.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/content/visit/places-to-visit/history-research-plans/jewel-tower-phased-plan">www.english-heritage.org.uk/content/visit/places-to-visit/history-research-plans/jewel-tower-phased-plan</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- By the mid 14th century, under the reign of Edward III (r.1327–77), a clear division existed between the ‘public’ parts of the palace around Westminster Hall (to the north) and the Privy Palace (to the south). As the site grew, the</td>
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</table>
administrative northern section began to encroach increasingly on the residential areas to the south, creating a clash between public functions of government and the private residence of the king and his family.
- The Privy Wardrobe was the office responsible for looking after the king’s most sensitive possessions and was largely based at the Tower of London.
- By the 1360s, the Privy Wardrobe at the Tower of London had become increasingly specialised as a store for weapons, so a new secure building was needed at Westminster Palace to keep the king’s treasures separate from weaponry such as firearms and explosives.
- In 1365, a new secure building (the Jewel Tower) was commissioned by the Keeper, William Usshborne.
- In 1512, the Palace of Westminster was severely damaged in a fire, prompting King Henry VIII to stop staying at Westminster and build a new palace at Whitehall. Jewel Tower continued to be used for storage, but the contents were of decreasing significance and the building began to deteriorate in condition.
- The tower was transferred to the Clerk and Keeper of the Records of Parliament, prompting a programme of repair and reconstruction to ensure that the tower was fit for its new function. Stone vaults were added as fire protection and the ground floor was converted to domestic use.
- The tower was transferred to the Board of Trade as their centre for testing and defining standardised weights and measures until the advent of the car and increasing vibrations from traffic, which was nearing in proximity, forced them to relocate.
- The Ministry of Works undertook the renovation of the Jewel Tower to halt the deterioration of the tower (worsened after the bombing in 1941) and to preserve and protect the historic fabric of the building, both the original medieval building and the 18th-century restorations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant times in the site’s past: peak activity, major developments, turning points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1365: the tower was commissioned by William Usshborne and land was seized from Westminster Abbey, angering the monks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1366: the tower was completed and the royal treasure was relocated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1512: the Palace of Westminster was severely damaged by fire, with only the Jewel Tower escaping destruction in the Privy Palace. Henry VIII ceased to live at the palace and shortly afterwards had a new palace built nearby at Whitehall, reusing materials from the ruined buildings at Westminster. The Jewel Tower history website <a href="http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history">www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Map of the Palace of Westminster in about 1400**
www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history/research

www.english-heritageshop.org.uk/books-media/guidebook-the-jewel-tower
### Jewel Tower:

Jewel Tower ceased to be used to store royal treasure and was instead used to store a disparate collection of items.

- **1600:** The tower was transferred to the Clerk and Keeper of the Records of Parliament. Work was undertaken to repair and update the tower for its new purpose.
- **1621:** A series of building works was undertaken at the tower to improve storage and protection against fire.
- **1716:** Sir Christopher Wren chaired a meeting of the Board of Works to discuss the condition of the tower, following a petition submitted by William Cowper, Clerk of the Parliaments.
- **1717:** A series of inspections revealed the Jewel Tower to be in a ‘ruinous condition’ and that the current space used by the Clerk was not sufficient to hold the records as required.
- **July 1717:** King George I signed a warrant authorising a sum of £870 to be used for the repairs.
- **1718:** Wren and the Secretary to the Board, Nicholas Hawksmoor, were dismissed from their posts on the Board of Works, hampering the progress of the repair works.
- **1719:** Work on the Jewel Tower was finally completed.
- **1753:** A stone vault was installed on the first floor at a cost of £350 and numbers 6 and 7 Old Palace Yard were installed to the east of the tower.
- **1827:** The volume of Parliamentary records exceeded the capacity of the Jewel Tower and records were moved to the Palace of Westminster.
- **1834:** A fire destroyed the House of Lords. While the heroic efforts of the Parliamentary officials and soldiers saved most of the Lords’ records kept in the palace, almost all of the documents of the Commons were destroyed.
- **1864:** All records were moved from the Jewel Tower to the newer, more fireproof, Victoria Tower.
- **1869:** The Jewel Tower was taken over by the Standards Department of the Board of Trade as it offered an internal environment free from vibration and sudden fluctuations in temperature.
- **1938:** The Department left the tower due to the worsening state of the building. Changes in the street pattern and the advent of the motor car meant the building was no longer suitable for their work.
- **1941:** The Jewel Tower was hit by incendiary bombs during the London Blitz.

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[heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history/significance](heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history/significance)

Most of the medieval roof was destroyed or damaged beyond repair.
- 1956: the Jewel Tower was opened to the public by English Heritage.
- 1962: all buildings attached to the Jewel Tower were demolished.
- 1962: the moat was excavated.
- 1987: Westminster was declared a World Heritage Site.

Photo of excavations in 1962 [www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history/sources](www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history/sources)

h) The significance of the specific features in the physical remains of the site

The Jewel Tower is a three-storey, L-shaped structure – a main block with a turret projecting eastwards from its southern end.

**Exterior**
- It is faced externally with Kentish ragstone. The stonework facing outwards from the palace was more finely worked than the rough stone visible from inside the royal garden, perhaps to show off to those outside.
- The essential form of the building has never changed.
- Around the western and southern parts of the tower, and continuing towards the east, are the remains of a medieval moat (now dry), contained on either side by a stone wall.
- The moat was an extra layer of security and allowed for easier access to the River Thames. This enabled the Keeper of the tower to transport the king’s treasure as it was needed.
- The south-facing walls of the Jewel Tower once extended further outwards to form the walls of the king’s garden, which separated the Jewel Tower from the Privy Palace.
- Along the precinct wall of Westminster Abbey, there is a sharp, and very noticeable, westward kink immediately south of the moat. This is evidence of the dispute between the monks and William Usshborne, Keeper of the Palace. The monks claimed that the moat and tower encroached on Abbey land. The wall was built, to the west of the original course, in about 1374 when the monks were forced to relinquish their claim on the land.

**Interior**
- All surviving windows and doors are 18th-century replacements in Portland limestone, under three-centred and round arches. The first-floor windows would originally have been small and narrow in the medieval style. The Visit to the Jewel Tower

Description of the Jewel Tower [www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history/description](www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history/description)

Jewel Tower image gallery [www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower](www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower)

enlarged windows indicate the tower’s repurposing by Parliament to make it fit to store their records. Using lamps or candles for light to see the delicate parchment would have made the tower at a high risk from an internal fire. To prevent this, the windows were increased in size and reinforced with iron bars and shutters for protection.

- The spiral staircase is a strong indication of the original purpose of the building and is a feat of medieval engineering.
- Additionally, the stairs are cantilevered, held in place by the weight of the staircase alone, meaning that no additional pins or engineering are required.
- The vaulted ceiling on the ground floor is considered an architectural masterpiece and indicates that medieval palaces could be no less grand than their ecclesiastical counterparts.
- The door from the stairwell to the main room on the second floor provides a key clue to the function of this room, and the Jewel Tower as a whole. The wooden door, most probably the original door, is made of eight thick vertical boards with iron studs. The stone frame indicates that there were originally two doors, with one opening outwards into the stairwell from hinges on the western side. The doors would have been secured with bars and locks.
- The room itself also hints at the importance of this space with a fireplace and a latrine (no longer visible), suggesting that the room was constantly manned.
- On the second floor, the original yew tree foundations have been displayed. These medieval foundations were replaced with later support. Yew tree was used as it resists water and was therefore ideal for the Jewel Tower.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>i) The importance of the whole site either locally or nationally, as appropriate</th>
<th>Locally</th>
<th>Nationally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- One of the last remaining parts of the original Palace of Westminster.</td>
<td>- Played a part in the development of modern Parliament in England.</td>
<td>- Played a part in the development of modern Parliament in England.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Outstanding example of medieval architecture.</td>
<td>- Connection with monarchs such as Edward III, Henry VIII and George I.</td>
<td>- Connection with monarchs such as Edward III, Henry VIII and George I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Indicates the importance of London and Westminster to successive monarchs from the Normans to now.</td>
<td>- International importance as the source of the definitive value of all weights and measures, across Britain and the British Empire.</td>
<td>- International importance as the source of the definitive value of all weights and measures, across Britain and the British Empire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Key example of the importance placed on protecting and preserving historic</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Visit to the Jewel Tower and other Westminster buildings

Jewel Tower significance website
www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history/significance

Late 15th-century reconstruction of the Palace of Westminster
www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history/significance
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1) The typicality of the site based on a comparison with other similar sites</th>
<th>Differences</th>
<th>The Jewel Tower is the last remaining part of the original Privy Palace, and one of few medieval buildings in London. In this respect, it is a rarity in London’s historic landscape.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|  | Similarities | - Double doors (two separate hinges with one door opening inwards, and one outwards) – similar to the Pyx Chamber in Westminster Abbey.  
- The Jewel Tower has similarities with the purpose and architectural style of parts of the Tower of London. Both are secure buildings, and were used to store precious royal possessions.  
- Westminster Hall is similar to the Jewel Tower and the Palace of Westminster as its architectural complexity was designed to display the Crown’s wealth and power in medieval times. |
| j) How the physical | - The monks of Westminster Abbey were furious when part of the consecrated land was seized for the construction of the Jewel Tower and its moat in the 1360s. This reveals opposing attitudes towards the sacredness of consecrated land.  
- From the need to expand the king’s palace, to the necessity to store Parliamentary records, the Jewel Tower reveals how Westminster transitioned from a royal residence to the heart of England’s political landscape.  
- As the British Empire spread across the globe, the need to implement standardised measures intensified. The Jewel Tower was the location from which all standardised measures and weights spread to the colonies. This reveals something of Victorian imperialist attitudes and values.  
- As space in London became increasingly scarce, the site of Westminster Abbey and the old Privy Palace became encroached upon by the urban spread, as evidenced by the archaeological finds in the moat. By the 20th century, the urban traffic became so overwhelming that the Board of Trade was forced to move to a new location. |
| k) What the site reveals about everyday life, attitudes and values in particular periods of history | Jewel Tower history website [www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history) | Visit to the Jewel Tower, Pyx Chamber and other London sites  
remains may prompt questions about the past and how historians frame these as valid historical enquiries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It tell about the past? What do we still need to know?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Where was it built? Where was it changed? Where did the people come from who used it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who built it? Who changed it? Who used it? Who was the last person to live here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- When did people first live here? When was it built? When was it changed? When was it used? When did it stop being used?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Why was it built? Why was it changed? Why was it used? Why was this location chosen? Why should we protect it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How was it built? How was it changed? How was it used? How much did it cost to build/change? How can it tell us about the past?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

m) How the physical remains can inform artistic reconstructions and other interpretations of the site

| - The Jewel Tower is (externally) nearly all original as it was in 1365, so the physical remains are a credible primary source from which to create artistic reconstructions. |
| - Some of the internal features of the Jewel Tower remain and can be used for artistic reconstructions of the remainder of the site. |
| - The use of other comparative sites is highly beneficial in understanding the missing architecture and décor from the site. For example, the medieval windows in the Jewel Tower have been altered, but we can copy surviving examples by the same master mason, in Westminster Hall. |
| - Identifying features and formations in the stone can indicate where certain structures would have been located, such as the lost walls adjoining the Jewel Tower, and a missing outer door to the second-floor room. |
| - The Jewel Tower is one of only four remaining sections of the original Palace of Westminster and is the only part regularly open to the public. It offers an insight into the shapes and relative sizes of the other buildings that formed the medieval Palace of Westminster. |

n) The challenges and benefits of studying the Jewel Tower

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Important source of primary information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Late 14th-century reconstruction of the Jewel Tower
[www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history/significance](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history/significance)

Map of the Palace of Westminster in about 1400
[www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history/research](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history/research)

Late 15th-century reconstruction of the Palace of Westminster
[www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower/history)

Jewel Tower image gallery
[www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/jewel-tower)

Visit to the Jewel Tower
| historic environment | - Gives a sense of place, well-being and cultural identity.  
- Allows visitors to connect people from the past to the place where they lived and worked.  
- Stimulating way to engage with history in the place where it happened.  

**Challenges**  
- Difficult to interpret due to lack of written sources and missing physical evidence.  
- Different interpretations of the same site and evidence. |