

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What features make up the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site?

The Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site takes in a complex military frontier zone, constructed by the Romans to mark the northern frontier of their empire. This frontier includes:

- Hadrian's Wall itself, protected by a ditch to its north and, at least at its eastern end, by pits filled with thorn branches, known as *Cippi* pits
- Fortlets, known as milecastles, every Roman mile on the Wall
- A pair of turrets between every milecastle
- A major ditch, known as the Vallum, to the south of the Wall
- Forts on, or close to, the Wall, built roughly a days' march apart, usually with a civilian settlement (or *vicus*) outside it
- Camps, probably used to protect troops and materials during the construction of the Wall, and to train troops
- Roads to link these various installations, as well as a road which formed the core of the Roman frontier before Hadrian's Wall was built
- Beyond the western end of the Wall, the Cumbrian coast was also protected by a series of forts, fortlets and towers, but largely without any linear barrier

Q: How can I find out which areas around Hadrian's Wall are protected and the rules that apply to them?

A: Most of the surviving remains of the Hadrian's Wall Roman frontier are protected as scheduled monuments under the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act¹. The best place to find out what areas are protected in this way is via the National Heritage List for England website:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/map-search>

Simple guidance on such sites, the rules that apply to them, as well as sources for further advice can be found at:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/scheduled-monuments-guide-for-owners-and-occupiers/>

With scheduled monuments Historic England has an important role in providing advice on management and proposed changes to owners, occupiers and many others wishing to carry out works. If you have a specific question about a scheduled monument, or wish to discuss a development or management proposal, you should contact Mike Collins (Inspector of Ancient Monuments) at

mike.collins@historicengland.org.uk or 0191 2691212

Q: What permissions will I need to work on a scheduled monument on Hadrian's Wall?

A: Work on a scheduled monument will normally require scheduled monument consent (SMC). This is obtained from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, who are advised by Historic England. Guidance on this process, and the necessary forms to apply for SMC, can be found at:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/consents/smc/>

Further advice can also be obtained from Mike Collins of Historic England as above.

In addition to SMC, it is important to consider that your plans could also require other permissions. Although not an exhaustive list, examples of these could include planning permission (obtained from your local council) or permission from Natural England to work in a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Q: Part of my land is within the WHS. Does this mean that nothing can ever change on it?

A: Not necessarily. Scheduling as an ancient monument should not normally prevent existing lawful use of land, and does not imply that all changes or development will be prevented. Instead, it is designed to provide a level of control to ensure that what is really significant about the monument is protected from harm.

Q: If my land is not a scheduled monument does this mean that it has no archaeological issues?

A: No. Although most of the surviving remains of Hadrian's Wall are protected, there are also parts of the frontier where the precise line of the frontier, and its state of preservation, mean that it cannot currently be legally protected.

In addition, particularly in urban areas, the remains of the Wall can often be managed best through the planning system, where archaeology is a key issue within section 12 of the National Planning Policy Frameworkⁱⁱ, rather than through scheduling.

There are also many other archaeological sites and remains unrelated to Hadrian's Wall which may have an impact on plans for development.

Q: I have plans for a development or building in the area around Hadrian's Wall. Who should I speak to about this?

A: It's always best to seek advice on both archaeological and general planning issues before making any applications, as this could save you both time and money.

For such pre-application advice you should contact your local planning authority, as well as Historic England, to talk through your ideas. This should allow you to

understand what issues you are likely to encounter with your plans at the earliest stage, allowing you to develop any scheme in a way most likely to be successful.

Q: What is the Buffer Zone around the World Heritage Site, and what is its purpose?

A: The Buffer Zone associated with Hadrian's Wall is not a part of the World Heritage Site (WHS) itself, but plays two important roles in its management:

1. In the urban areas of Carlisle, Newcastle and North Tyneside, where few of the remains of the Wall are currently protected by scheduling, it provides a clear indication of the line of the Roman frontier. When development plans are then put forward, this provides a simple reminder of an area of high sensitivity, where archaeological issues will require careful thought
2. Across much of the rest of the WHS, the Buffer Zone provides a simple indication of the area around the Roman archaeological remains where development plans require particularly careful consideration for their impact on the setting of the WHS.

Further information on the setting of the WHS is contained elsewhere on this website, but it's important to be clear that the Buffer Zone does not imply that no development should be allowed within it, nor that provided a development is outside this zone then it cannot cause harm to the WHS.

Q: I want to use a metal detector in the Hadrian's Wall area. What are the rules for this?

A: In addition to the permission of the landowner, specific permission from Historic England is required to use a metal detector on all parts of Hadrian's Wall that are legally protected as scheduled monuments. Metal detecting without this is a criminal offence for which you could be prosecuted.

Outside of these protected areas, metal detection can make an important contribution to our understanding of the past:

1. Many detectorists take part in more general archaeological fieldwork, particularly in helping to ensure that metallic finds are not missed
2. Most detectorists take their responsibilities to the heritage very seriously, and abide by best practice guidance for their work:
<https://finds.org.uk/getinvolved/guides/codeofpractice>

Q: What is Outstanding Universal Value?

A: Outstanding Universal Value (or OUV) is the level of significance required for a site or property to be accepted by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

Each U.K. World Heritage Site has a statement which sets out where this significance liesⁱⁱⁱ. It is the significance set out in this statement, which relates to

Roman military planning and land use, which we are working to protect through conservation, planning and heritage management. There clearly are many other designations within the area covered by the WHS, and other issues for those who live within, or visit it, but for Hadrian's Wall as a WHS it is exclusively this OUV which we are seeking to protect.

ⁱ http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1979/46/pdfs/ukpga_19790046_en.pdf

ⁱⁱ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://hadrianswallcountry.co.uk/hadrians-wall-management-plan/hadrians-wall-significance>