Historic England

Commercial Sites

Scheduling Selection Guide

Summary

Historic England's scheduling selection guides help to define which archaeological sites are likely to meet the relevant tests for national designation and be included on the National Heritage List for England. For archaeological sites and monuments, they are divided into categories ranging from Agriculture to Utilities and complement the listing selection guides for buildings. Scheduling is applied only to sites of national importance, and even then only if it is the best means of protection. Only deliberately created structures, features and remains can be scheduled. The scheduling selection guides are supplemented by the Introductions to Heritage Assets which provide more detailed considerations of specific archaeological sites and monuments.

This selection guide offers an overview of the sorts of archaeological monument or site associated with commerce which are likely to be deemed to have national importance, and for which of those scheduling may be appropriate. It aims to do two things: to set these within their historical context, and to give an introduction to the designation approaches employed.

Front cover

The scheduled market cross at Brigstock , Northamptonshire. While much renewed, notably in 1586, the cross is probably medieval in origin. Brigstock received a grant to hold a market and fair in 1466 and the cross stands in its market place. The market petered out in the early eighteenth century.

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More broadly, the evidence of archaeological sites and monuments stands, as always, alongside that provided by documentary records. With commerce and exchange, especially, a third evidential strand, the particular characteristics of recovered archaeological artefacts (whether stylistic, or physical, such as the petrology of clay used to make pots) allows local, national and international trade routes to be defined and sometimes quantified. This holds good for all periods, but is of especial value for eras without detailed written records.

1 Historical Summary

1.1 The Earlier Prehistoric Period

Artefacts whose place of origin or manufacture can be traced – whether because of physical characteristics (eg the geological origin of Neolithic stone axeheads, or the petrological signature of inclusions in pottery) or 'cultural' traits such as particular styles of decoration – have long been one of the key means of investigating prehistoric societies. Whether items were traded, exchanged, or travelled for other reasons, is often a harder question to address than more mechanical ones dealing with how and where something was made.

There is also a lack of hard evidence for where trade or exchange was carried out, although it is assumed, from the evidence available, that such would have been carried out – presumably complementing the activities of itinerant traders and peddlers – at annual or seasonal assemblies like those which are believed to have occurred at early Neolithic causewayed enclosures (see Causewayed Enclosures IHA).

1.2 Later Prehistory

While it is likely that some hillforts and other large settlements had a commercial or market role in the Iron Age, only with the emergence of oppida (see Oppida IHA) in the late second century BC are there permanent, and populous, settlements which had an undeniable commercial function. At much the same time coins became fairly commonplace, including some relatively low-value issues. Not all may have been used as a medium of payment, but much clearly was.

1.3 Roman

Following the Roman conquest urban centres of different sizes, and different functions, were founded or developed across the country, most densely in the midlands and south. There was clearly a thriving and varied economy with large amounts of low-value coinage in everyday use. Larger towns at least had a central forum, or market place, and in some towns such as Silchester (Hampshire), *Verulamium* (Hertfordshire) and Wroxeter (Shropshire; Fig 1) excavation or survey has identified *tabernae* (shops or workshops), typically strip-buildings set end-on to the street with the room or rooms closest to the street used as a shop or workshop.

While approaches to scheduling urban areas in general are treated in the Settlement Sites scheduling selection guide, the presence of a central complex of civic buildings will add considerably to the national importance of any place.

The army and navy had independent supply mechanisms, and large granaries and other storage facilities have been located on military bases. Those facilities are treated in the Military Sites: Pre-1500 scheduling selection guide.

1.4 Anglo-Saxon and Viking

In England, the formal economy largely, or in the case of many industries, wholly collapsed in the decades around AD 400 with the end of formal Roman rule. The issue of coinage ceased, and it appears that England largely reverted to prehistoric models of subsistence, barter, exchange and tribute. There was some long distance trade, but
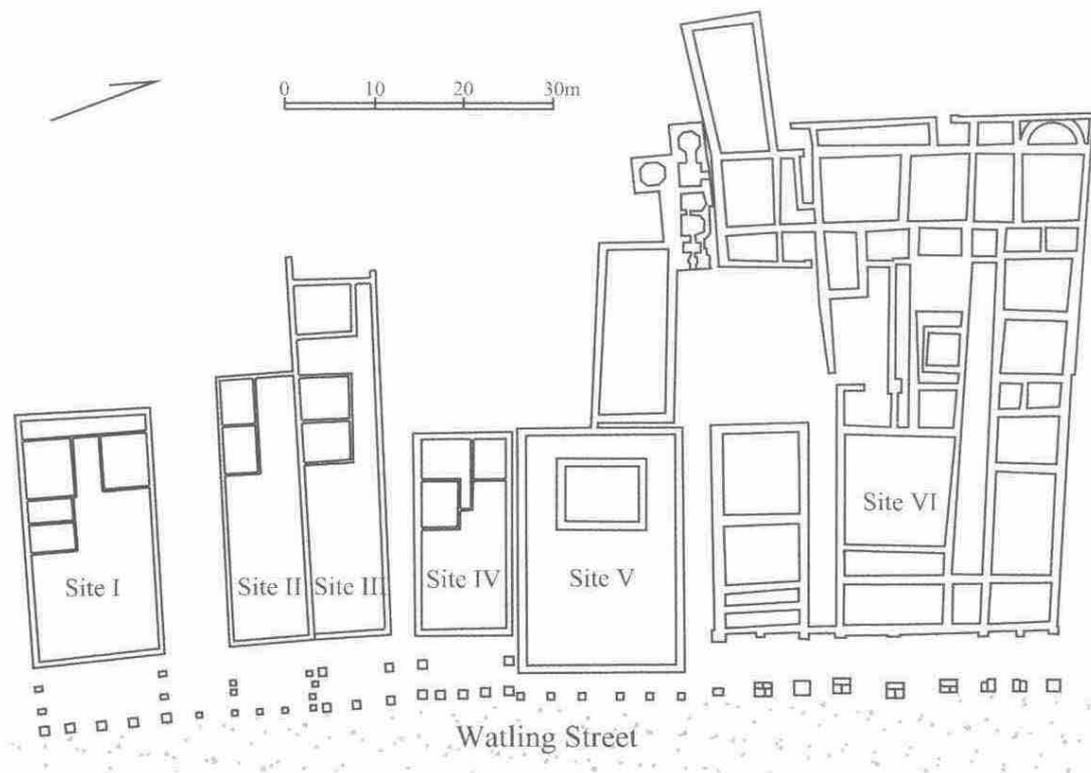
Figure 1
Insula viii at Wroxeter, Shropshire, excavated in the
early twentieth century by J P Bushe-Foxe showing
tabernae fronting a colonnaded street.

mainly of luxury goods, such as the wine
and oil evidenced by Mediterranean pottery
containers found on sites in western Britain.

Then, about AD 700, coastal trading places
known as *wics* began to emerge around the North
Sea, for instance at Ipswich (Suffolk), *Hamwic*
(Southampton, Hampshire) and near London and
York. These places later became major trading
centres, whereas other *wics*, such as Fordwich
and Sandwich in Kent did not. Place-names, like
Greenwich, suggest the location of other such
sites along the Thames. Further evidence for the
revival of trade at this time is the re-emergence of
coinage in the late seventh century.

As metal detecting has become an ever-more
popular hobby, and as some archaeologists
have begun to use such devices for systematic
survey, pre-Conquest sites (especially of the
eighth and ninth centuries) with exceptional
densities of metal finds and coins have
begun to be identified, which have been
given the name 'productive sites'.

What they represent remains debated, although
study of those in Lincolnshire, for instance,
has noted their location inland, on important
lines of communication including rivers and
prehistoric and Roman route-ways. On balance
one or more functions involving commerce,
marketing, and exchange seems highly probable,
at least for major sites; coins, for instance, often
exhibit a wide variety of English and foreign
issues. However, simple and mono-causal
explanations of function may be misguided.
Similarly, to date there has been too little survey
or excavation to give any clear indication of
whether such sites were gathering places where
activities took place, or whether they were
permanently settled, and possessed structures.

In the mid-late ninth century a new phase of
urban growth can be seen in the Danelaw area

of midland and northern Britain where there was Scandinavian (Viking) conquest and settlement. Derby, Leicester, Lincoln, Nottingham and Stamford emerged (or were promoted) as places of administration and trade.

Part of the Saxon response to the Scandinavian threat had been *burhs*, fortified centres, many of which were already towns, or later developed into such. Found across Mercia and Wessex, many expanded in the tenth century; at Winchester (Hampshire), to take a well-studied example, urban life was so vibrant that the numerous traders and manufacturers were found grouped together in streets like Tanner Street, Fleshmonger Street and Wheelwright Street.

The evidence of archaeology complements that of the documentary sources, with the laws of Edward the Elder (899-924) and Athelstan (927-39) clearly showing the official regulation of marketing in towns. Coinage reforms took place under Edgar (957-75), requiring the regular recalling of silver pennies for re-minting; again, a vibrant money-based economy is indicated.

1.5 Medieval

After the Norman Conquest, sometimes as part of the mechanisms of controlling and exploiting the indigenous population, further towns were set up alongside castles. Over the twelfth and thirteenth century large numbers of further towns, or additional suburbs, were founded by lords keen to benefit financially from expanding rent rolls, tolls and dues. A high proportion of these had planned streets and plots. Taken overall, the Domesday Book of 1086 recorded about 110 places as 'boroughs', which approximate to places with urban functions. By 1310 their number had grown to about 650, and almost 20 per cent of the population lived in a town.

Markets – often held weekly in larger villages, and nominally requiring a licence – proliferated, and some 1,200 places gained a market charter between 1227 and 1350. In cities, towns and villages across the land such commerce was increasingly facilitated by the provision of paved market places (Shrewsbury (Shropshire), for instance, gained a new one in 1261), covered spaces including market halls, and market crosses. About 50 places described as a market cross are Scheduled Monuments, although some of these are roofed structures.

With individual houses, commercial and mercantile activity is evidenced by features such as shuttered ground-floor shop windows (for which see also the Commerce and Exchange Buildings listing selection guide) and undercrofts (cellars); Chester has perhaps the richest collection of these. Undercrofts were mainly for storage, although sometimes goods were displayed and sold. Others were used as alehouses: in both Chester and Winchester there were taverns named 'Helle', presumably because they were underground and dark.

In larger towns and cities particular types of vendor, trades and industries tended to congregate together, either of their own volition for commercial reasons or because zoning – especially of noxious shops and activities, like butchers and tanners – was imposed by civic authorities. Such spatial separation is evidenced in many ways, from documents and street names, via buildings, to below-ground archaeology.

Regional and supra-regional trade was facilitated, in part, by fairs. In 1329 goods offered for sale at Southampton fair – admittedly well-placed for access to international trade – included a wide range of groceries, spices and wine, cloth and dyes, household goods, and building materials. Two English fairs were mentioned by the Domesday Book in 1086, and like markets they proliferated in the twelfth, and especially thirteenth, centuries. A few fairs, notably those at Boston (Lincolnshire), Lynn (Norfolk), St Ives (Cambridgeshire) and Winchester (Hampshire) stood paramount and had international reputations. At county level Derbyshire, for instance, had 24 medieval fairs with a total of 120 fair days.

Most fairs were held outside settlements, often on commons. Although on the whole fairgrounds lacked the infrastructure – paved surfaces and the like – of market places, some major fairs, like Winchester's sixteen-day fair held on St Giles's Hill, saw booths and other structures become at least semi-permanent, with traders in the same sorts of commodities grouped together down 'streets'. As with markets, there was an over-supply of fairs by the fourteenth centuries, and some ceased. Others, however, carried on being held until outmoded by the changing commercial patterns which followed in the wake of the road improvements, and the arrival of canals and railways, from the eighteenth century. And a number, of course, changed their character and became principally annual revels.

In the late Middle Ages, after the crises and calamities of the middle decades of the fourteenth century including the successive visitations of the Black Death, new town foundation ended, and most existing places saw stagnation. But not all; Oxford, Bristol, York, and many others both large and small, saw the construction of ever-larger and taller town houses, some of them commercial investments to let, and the expansion of suburbs.

1.6 Post-Medieval

During this period the range of premises devoted to commerce expanded very considerably, both in towns, cities and ports, and along canals, turnpikes and railways. Standing examples survive for most if not all types, often in large numbers. Again, for these see the Commerce and Exchange listing selection guide.

2 Overarching Considerations

2.1 Scheduling and protection

Archaeological sites and monuments vary greatly in character, and can be protected in many ways: through positive management by owners, through policy, and through designation. In terms of our designation system, this consists of several separate approaches which operate alongside each other, and our aim is to recommend the most appropriate sort of protection for each asset. Our approach towards designation will vary, depending on the asset in question: our selection guides aim to indicate our broad approaches, but are subordinate to Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) policy.

Scheduling, through triggering careful control and the involvement of Historic England, ensures that the long-term interests of a site are placed first. It is warranted for sites with real claims to national importance which are the most significant remains in terms of their key place in telling our national story, and the need for close management of their archaeological potential. Scheduled monuments possess a high order of significance: they derive this from their archaeological and historic interest. Our selection guides aim to indicate some of the grounds of importance which may be relevant. Unlike listed buildings, scheduled sites are not generally suited to adaptive re-use.

Scheduling is discretionary: the Secretary of State has a choice as to whether to add a site to the Schedule or not. Scheduling is deliberately selective: given the ever-increasing numbers of archaeological remains which continue to be identified and interpreted, this is unavoidable. The Schedule aims to capture a representative sample of nationally important sites, rather than be an inclusive compendium of all such assets.

Given that archaeological sensitivity is all around us, it is important that all means of protecting archaeological remains are recognised. Other designations such as listing can play an important part here. Other sites may be identified as being of national importance, but not scheduled. Government policy affords them protection through the planning system, and local authorities play a key part in managing them through their archaeological services and Historic Environment Records (HERs).

The Schedule has evolved since it began in 1882, and some entries fall far short of modern standards. We are striving to upgrade these older records as part of our programme of upgrading the National Heritage List for England. Historic England continues to revise and upgrade these entries, which can be consulted on the Historic England Website.

2.2 Heritage assets and national importance

Paragraph 194 and footnote 63 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018) states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification and for assets of the highest significance

should be wholly exceptional; 'non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets'. These assets are defined as having National Importance (NI). This is the latest articulation of a principle first raised in PPG16 (1990-2010) and later in PPS5 (2010-2012).

2.3 Selection criteria

The particular considerations used by the Secretary of State when determining whether sites of all types are suitable for statutory designation through scheduling are set out in their Scheduled Monuments Policy Statement.

Figure 2
The fourteenth-century market cross at Helpston, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire.

3 Considerations by Period

3.1 Prehistoric

The site and monument types discussed above associated with what is here termed commerce and exchange will generally already be scheduled, or strong candidates for such if new discoveries.

3.2 Roman

Similarly, Roman sites associated with commerce and exchange will generally already be scheduled, or strong candidates for such if new discoveries. Forums are likely to form part of a central civic group, while *tabernae* are likely to offer one the clearest signatures of local economic life. However, scheduling will not always be the most appropriate designation in Roman towns and cities which lie beneath later conurbations, and this is discussed further in the Settlement Sites scheduling selection guide.

3.3 Anglo-Saxon and Viking

The majority of *wics*, those *burhs* which had an urban function and other places of commerce lie beneath later towns and cities, the designation approaches to which are treated in the Settlement Sites scheduling selection guide. Any such sites which lie wholly or partially outside later built-up areas will be of national importance and strong candidates for scheduling. While productive sites are likely to be of national importance, scheduling could only be considered if, via survey or excavation, the presence of associated structures or other works (say boundary ditches) was proven.

Some *burhs*, such as Wareham (Dorset) and Lydford (Devon), have well-preserved sections of their defences scheduled; for this see the scheduling selection guide covering Military Sites pre-1500.

3.4 Medieval and later

Medieval houses and commercial premises which survive largely intact will generally be listed. Even where the above-ground structure has been lost, but an undercroft survives either under open ground or under a later building (listed or otherwise) listing is likely to be the most appropriate designation response.

Historically, market crosses and the like – whether columnar monoliths or shelters (often ornate), and market halls – have sometimes been listed, and sometimes scheduled (Fig 2); some are dual-designated. While scheduling will remain the preferred option for ancient crosses, listing will be favoured for roofed structures. Paved or cobbled market places, if of sufficient interest and early date – which is likely to be eighteenth century or earlier – will be potential candidates for listing, as discussed in the listing selection guide treating Street Furniture.

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5 Where to Get Advice

If you would like to contact the Listing Team in one of our regional offices, please email: customers@HistoricEngland.org.uk noting the subject of your query, or call or write to the local team at:

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