

Copy of email correspondence received from Mike Collins - English Heritage on 27.03.08

Dear Ms Devlin,

Thank you for your recent email that has been passed on to me by my colleague Kay Pennington.

You will probably be unsurprised that English Heritage has an interest in the former water treatment works at Throckley, because of the presence of Hadrian's Wall and related features of the Roman frontier beneath the road and immediately to its north along Hexham Road. These remains are protected under the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. In this area, the scheduled area covers the road and pavement up to the southern boundary wall of the water treatment works, albeit the southern part of the site is still regarded as being archaeologically sensitive even though it lies outside the scheduled area. Within the scheduled area, any works require the permission of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with English Heritage acting as an advisor to them.

Given this sensitivity, English Heritage has been consulted with reference to possible plans for the redevelopment of the site. Our role here, alongside the County Archaeologist, is to ensure that the archaeology of the Roman frontier is properly treated as part of the development process. With reference to the scheduled area it would appear that the current proposal will involve changes to access and also connection into services within Hexham Road. Accordingly, we have advised the development team that the first stage would be for them to commission an archaeological evaluation of these elements, consisting of a single archaeological trial trench from the north and into the road. This would provide us with information about the location, depth, and importance of the archaeology present on the site, and therefore to allow a judgment to be made as to the likely impact of the development scheme in this area, and until such evaluation works have taken place we therefore won't know whether the proposals can be accommodated without unacceptable impact on the archaeology of the site.

My understanding is also that some works will be necessary on the culvert and boundary wall. Here decisions about acceptability, and whether any further evaluation work will be necessary to inform decisions on this, will depend on the full details of what degree of excavation or disturbance that will be necessary here, and we await details on this.

I hope that this is useful to you, and please don't hesitate to contact me if I can help any further at this stage.

Yours,

Mike Collins
Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist
English Heritage