

Archaeology and Scheduled Ancient Monuments

A guide to Archaeology and Ancient Monuments in Birmingham.

What are archaeological remains?

Archaeological remains provide information on all periods of Birmingham's past, from prehistoric times to the present day. They consist of man made structures such as walls, ditches and pits; objects such as pottery and tools; industrial residues; and plant and animal remains that indicate past environmental conditions and show how resources were exploited and managed. Archaeological remains survive in all parts of the city, as features visible above ground as well as buried remains.

Archaeological remains are heritage assets and part of the historic environment along with historic buildings, landscapes and townscapes. They contain information about the city's past and contribute to the present character and distinctiveness of the city, provide a sense of place and contribute to the quality of life. Because they are irreplaceable, the likely effect of new development on archaeological remains is taken into account when planning applications are considered.

How do I find out whether a new development might affect archaeological remains?

Birmingham's Historic Environment Record is a database of all known archaeological sites and finds in the city. The location of sites on the Historic Environment Record are now available online at: birmingham.gov.uk/her

What type of development might affect archaeological remains?

Buried archaeological remains may be affected by any ground disturbance, including levelling; digging trenches for foundations; pipes or cables; landscaping and tree planting. Work to historic buildings, whether or not they are listed or locally listed, and works in conservation areas and registered parks, may also affect archaeological remains.

What do I have to include in my planning application?

Depending on the type of development and its likely effect on archaeological remains, an archaeological desk-based assessment and field evaluation may be required, so that we have sufficient information to determine an application. This assessment brings together existing information about the site and includes a detailed search of the Historic Environment Record and historic maps. An archaeological evaluation may include excavated trenches, geophysical survey, recording details of a building, or sampling deposits likely to contain information on past environmental conditions. We will prepare briefs describing the works required, and you will need to employ an archaeologist to undertake the desk-based assessment and field evaluation.

How may archaeological remains affect the planning decision?

In some cases the impact of the proposed development on archaeological remains may be such that planning permission will not be granted, but more often planning conditions will be imposed requiring archaeological works before development starts, or the design of a development may need to be modified to protect archaeological remains. Archaeological works are likely to consist of archaeological excavation or recording historic buildings, followed by analysis of the results, and publication of a report. They may include analysis of environmental data, and tree-ring dating of buildings. We will prepare briefs describing the works required, and you will need to employ an archaeologist to undertake them. Design modifications may include alterations to the location and layout of buildings, foundation design and construction details of surfaces. Protecting, incorporating and interpreting archaeological remains can enhance the design of a development.

What happens if development affecting archaeological remains is started without planning permission?

We will follow our Planning Enforcement process for development requiring planning permission. In addition, anyone undertaking unauthorised works on a scheduled ancient monument or a listed building is liable to criminal prosecution.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

What is a scheduled ancient monument?

A Scheduled Ancient Monument is an archaeological site that is considered to be nationally important and is included on a list of sites compiled by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Scheduled Ancient Monuments are protected by law and it is a criminal offence to undertake work on them (whether or not those works require planning permission) without Scheduled Monument Consent. Applications for consent are administered by Historic England who advise the Secretary of State. Further information can be obtained by visiting: historicengland.org.uk

Work on scheduled ancient monuments may also require planning permission. In this case we will work closely with Historic England to ensure that the planning application and scheduled monument consent application are considered in parallel.

How can I find out about scheduled ancient monuments in Birmingham?

13 archaeological sites in Birmingham are currently designated as scheduled ancient monuments, these can be found by visiting: birmingham.gov.uk/archaeologysam

Full descriptions and maps showing the locations and extent of these sites are in the National Heritage list for England: historicengland.org.uk

The City Design and Conservation Team

Our City Design and Conservation Team provide specialist advice and guidance on all conservation matters including archaeological remains, listed buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens, locally listed buildings, and trees. For more information on conservation and tree issues please visit:

birmingham.gov.uk/conservation

We encourage everyone to help protect Birmingham's archaeological remains, for themselves and for residents and visitors now and in the future. To find out more about archaeology in Birmingham please visit:

birmingham.gov.uk/archaeology

Getting in touch

Telephone
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Web

Archaeology in Birmingham:
birmingham.gov.uk/archaeology

Scheduled Ancient Monuments:
birmingham.gov.uk/archaeologysam

Historic Environment Record:
The location of sites on the Historic Environment Record are now available online at:
birmingham.gov.uk/her

E-mail

Planning and Regeneration general enquiries:
planningandregenerationenquiries@birmingham.gov.uk

Your views

Let us have your comments, compliments or complaints:
birmingham.gov.uk/yourviews

Other useful contacts

Historic England
Web: historicengland.org.uk

Council for British Archaeology, West Midlands
Web: archaeologyuk.org

Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society
Web: bwas-online.co.uk

