

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ
WORLD HERITAGE LIST N° 430

A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : Hadrian's Wall Military Zone

Location : Counties of Cumbria, Northumbria and Tyne and Wear

State Party : United Kingdom

Date : December 23, 1986

B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria II, III and IV.

C) JUSTIFICATION

Following the invasion of 43, the Roman conquest of Britain progressed rapidly in the southern part of the country but in the 1st century A.D. encountered resistance from unconquerable tribes in the north. The victorious expeditions of Agricola in Scotland and the series of forts that the general had built to control the zone between Tyne to the east and Solway to the west brought the Roman armies only precarious safety.

In 122 during an inspection visit, Emperor Hadrian decided to establish a military zone with a wall barring the peninsula along a distance of 118 kms, from Newcastle to Bowness, which is the most symbolic element, if not the most important from the strategic standpoint. The 6.5 m-high wall, reinforced by a V-shaped ditch to the south, was not an insurmountable obstacle, rather a defense line reinforced every Roman mile (1,480 m) by a small fort which could accommodate about 20 soldiers. Between the forts, two watchtowers were used for surveillance of the horizon. The major part of the project was carried out immediately from 122 to 124, and the haste of the engineers meant the use of local materials of unequal resistance (stone is found only in the eastern section of the wall). In 124-125, the decision was made to reinforce the limes by a series of forts spaced approximately every 7 miles (11 kms) and intended to replace the older works of Agricola. The wall was extended from Newcastle to Wallsend to the east, and the parts built with lighter materials during the first campaign were soon restored in stone. This overall repair of the constructions, which may be observed along their entire length, was done in the 130s. Along with those repairs, the defense line was also reinforced, on the inside by a parallel vallum nearly 100 m in width which included a rectangular section ditch situated between two earth banks. Roads and rampart walks were made to facilitate

circulation between the various fortified constructions.

The assault against the Picts, undertaken from this formidable operations base in 138-139 set the stage for an advance from the frontier toward the north and a temporary abandoning of Hadrian's Wall. However, the failure of the conquest of Scotland resulted in a strategic withdrawal back to that defensive position. In 160, Hadrian's Wall was used again. Its operational value was demonstrated during the campaigns of 180, 205-208 and 209-211. The pax romana of the 3rd century, at which time the barbarian peril seemed to be conspiring along the British limes, was not decisive in deciding to abandon a military zone, the need for which was henceforth recognized. The wall continued to be used until the departure of the Roman legions.

Hadrian's Wall has been respected by time. The only damage of note occurred during the second Jacobite revolt, when in 1745 General Wade had some portions of the Roman fortifications destroyed in order to establish a strategic road. Today the wall offers an incomparable ensemble of defensive constructions and settlements in an archaeological zone that is no doubt the largest in the United Kingdom.

ICOMOS wishes to emphasize the exemplary character of the nomination with respect to the Hadrian's Wall Military Zone. The presentation of such an extensive and diversified ensemble poses many problems of identification and delimitation; full consideration should be given to existing and future possibilities of conservation and enhancement of the heritage. In this respect, the file prepared is exemplary.

Some 100 monuments and sites are under the control of the government in an entire sector which extends over three counties. Management of the archaeological zone is committed to appropriately resolving various specific factors: maintenance of the masonry of the walls and decapitated towers; conservation by planting grass on the vallum (as in Sewingshields); unearthing of the very extensive vestiges of forts and garrisons (Chesters Fort, Housesteads Fort, Corbridge Roman Station, etc.); presentation to the public in site museums of material recovered from excavations (Chesterholm, Chesters, Corbridge, Housesteads, South Shields); a more pedagogical approach adopted at the Roman Army Museum at Carvoran; and safeguarding of the traditional rural countryside of the area of the limes surrounding Cawfields and Housesteads.

This file could at a later date constitute a reference for any proposal aimed at identifying an exceptional but very large cultural property (fortification, road, canal, etc.) for the purpose of its inclusion on the World Heritage List.

ICOMOS recommends the inclusion of Hadrian's Wall on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria II, III and IV.

- Criterion II. Hadrian's Wall exerted great influence on the spatial organization of the British limes over approximately 300 years. This frontier zone is still a part of the landscape from Tyne to Solway.

- Criterion III. This military zone bears exceptional testimony to Roman colonization by the large number of human settlements associated with the defenses: the vicus of Vindolanda (Chesterholm) is an excellent example of a garrison settlement which contributes to an understanding of how, in times of peace, away from the entrenched camp, soldiers and their families lived.

- Criterion IV. Hadrian's Wall is an outstanding example of a fortified limes. No other ensemble from the Roman Empire illustrates as ambitious and coherent a system of defensive constructions perfected by engineers over the course of several generations. Whether with respect to military architectural construction techniques, strategic design in the Imperial period or a policy for ground use and the organization of space in a frontier zone, this cultural property is an exceptional reference whose universal value leaves no doubt.

ICOMOS, May 1987