We continually revise our Statements of Significance, so they may vary in length, format and level of detail. While every effort is made to keep them up to date, they should not be considered a definitive or final assessment of our properties.
BEARSDEN BATH-HOUSE

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The property forms part of the Antonine Wall and comprises the remains of a Roman bathhouse and latrine in Bearsden, a suburb of Glasgow. It was set within the annexe of the Roman fort at Bearsden, which is now under modern housing.

The Antonine Wall is a linear Roman frontier system of wall and ditch accompanied at stages by forts and fortlets, linked by a road system termed the Military Way, stretching 60 km from Bo’ness on the Forth to Old Kilpatrick on the Clyde. It is one of only three linear barriers along the 2000 km European frontier of the Roman Empire. These systems are unique to Britain and Germany.

CHARACTER OF THE MONUMENT

Historical Overview

- Antonine Wall construction initiated by Emperor Antoninus Pius (AD 138–161) after a successful campaign in AD 139/142 by the Governor of Britain, Lollius Urbicus
- Fort (and bathhouse?), or nearby Antonine Wall, was built by legio XX Valeria Victrix
- Antonine Wall system abandoned, possibly after AD 165, and the line of frontier shifted again to Hadrian’s Wall

Archaeological Overview

1755: Upstanding remains planned by General W Roy.

1973–82: Excavations by D Breeze uncovered the plan and layout of the fort and annexe. In 1973 the bathhouse was found.

The property has provided a wealth of information on the function and design of Roman military bathhouses.

Artistic/Architectural Overview

The bath-house is well preserved and is the single most impressive standing stone building of the whole Antonine Wall system. The building displays all the parts of a classical bathing structure, with a series of plunge pools and heated rooms and a latrine to the south-west.

The bath-house lies in the annexe of Bearsden Roman fort, a rectangular structure of 0.90 hectare area which abutted the south rampart of the Antonine Wall, through which a gate was placed. It was built of a turf rampart 4.3m wide on stone platform. Gates were placed on the south, east and west sides. The annexe may have been part of the original design which was later sub-divided. Both the annexe and fort were ringed by double ditches on all three sides. The fort interior had stone-built granaries and timber barracks/store and workshop. There was no indication of a headquarters building.
Social Overview
The site is currently a leisure space.

In 2003 the Scottish Executive announced that the Antonine Wall (including this stretch) would be nominated as a World Heritage Site. Such a designation brought enhanced social significance to the monument and its setting.

Spiritual Overview
The site does not currently fulfil a spiritual role.

Aesthetic Overview
The property is a pleasant spot within a suburban environment.

What are the major gaps in understanding of the property?
N/A

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Key Points
- Single most impressive building of the Antonine Wall system
- Part of second best preserved Roman frontier after Hadrian’s Wall

Associated Properties

Bar Hill; Hillhead; Castlecary; Croy Hill; Rough Castle; Seabegs Wood; Tamfourhill; Westerwood; Cumbernauld Airfield–Wyndford Road; Wyndford Road

Keywords
Roman frontier; limes; Antonine Wall; Hadrian's Wall; World Heritage Site