



**Figure 1a.**  
**Roman Villa: earlier phase**

The earliest evidence of settlement on the site of the Roman Villa is of the Iron Age period. Barrows in the locality date from that period. It is unlikely that barrows would have been built in dense woodland and so it is probable that the landscape was more open at that time than it is now. Environmental evidence also suggests that the climate was wetter.

It is possible that the Roman Villa at Chedworth was preceded by an Iron Age house located in the lower courtyard area.

The Roman villa probably originated in the 2nd or early 3rd century AD. The earliest evidence of the villa is a rough trackway in the lower courtyard and some post holes. This area was probably initially a farmyard with outbuildings.

In order to build the villa, the valley floor required terracing and soil was dug from the slopes and placed downhill to create a series of platforms. It is believed that there were two broad periods of development of the villa. In the earlier period, a villa was built around the inner courtyard. It has been suggested that it originated as three separate ranges along the north, west and south sides of the site. In the later phase, during the 4th century, the villa was extended substantially.

The layout to the left, shown in red, is based on an analysis of the villa's development presented in the National Trust's guidebook published in 1979. Subsequent investigations suggest that this may have been a mis-interpretation. The only thing that is reasonably certain is that the early villa occupied the area around the inner courtyard and was probably relatively unpretentious. There is evidence that the early buildings along the west and south sides were burnt down and rebuilt. The later phase entailed substantial re-development of the buildings round the courtyard and construction of the two wings extending eastward towards the river (see Figure 1b).