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SUMMARY

The watching brief failed to identify any past cultural activity. A sequence of natural clay overlain by mixed topsoil and building debris suggested that any potential archaeological remains would have been removed during late 19th century house building.

No sub-surface archaeological features were present. Possibly, the area was not developed or settled during the Roman period in order to maintain the integrity of the Wall defences and thereby delineate a clear division between military and civilian activity.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Origins

Cumbria County Council's Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) was consulted by Carlisle City Council regarding planning permission at 14 St George's Crescent, Carlisle (figure 1).



Figure 1. Site location (OS Copyright, Licence no. 100044205)

As potential and significant archaeological remains may occur, an archaeological watching brief was requested by Cumbria County Council.

The condition exists “to afford reasonable opportunity for an examination to be made to determine the existence of any remains of archaeological interest within the site and for the examination and recording of such remains, in accordance with Policy LE10 of the Carlisle District Local Plan 2001-2016”.

Gerry Martin Associates Ltd was commissioned by Margaret and David MacLennan, the clients to undertake a Programme of Archaeological Watching Brief relating to the ground works for this development.

The development of the site involved the machine removal of topsoil and overburden within the proposed footprint.

This report illustrates the results of that archaeological watching brief with reference to archaeological context as summarised in the section entitled historical context.

All projects are carried out in accordance with PPS 5 (2010) and the guidelines and recommendations issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists and English Heritage. Gerry Martin,

the Archaeological Project Manager has achieved the accreditation level of MIfA (Member) with the Institute of Archaeologists (IfA).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Project Design

In response to a request by Cumbria County Council's Historic Environment Service (CCCHES), Gerry Martin Associates Ltd submitted a Working Scheme of Investigation (WSI). The WSI document outlined the contractors' professional competence as well as general project objectives, including the methodology and the resources needed for the successful expedition of this work.

Gerry Martin Associates Ltd were commissioned to undertake the archaeological fieldwork following approval of the project design by the curatorial body.

The following report has been assembled to the relevant standards and protocols of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation, 2008), combined with accepted best practice and in accordance with the brief prepared by the curatorial authority.

Fieldwork took place on 6th and 13th June 2014 and was undertaken by Gerry Martin and Jo Beaty.

2.2 Archive

The archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design and the guidelines set out by English Heritage (1991) and the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994).

The archive will be deposited with an appropriate repository, Tullie House Museum, Carlisle and a copy of the report donated to the County Sites and Monuments Record, as requested by the curatorial authority.

This report will be available online as grey literature on the *Oasis* website.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Location, topography and geology

Solid geology comprises red Permo-Triassic sandstone solid geology that during the last glaciations was eroded and then overlain by a thick layer of pink Boulder Clay and outwash consisting of sand and gravel.

The prospect overlooks the River Eden on a bluff that is known as Stanwix Bank, a short but steep gradient leading up to the village that is located on a narrow plateau.

Stanwix was an important military facility encompassing the largest Roman cavalry fort (*Ala Petriana*) on Hadrian's Wall. The Wall, Vallum and fort are protected as Scheduled Ancient Monuments as illustrated in red outline (figure 2).

The scheduled area does not advance westwards beyond Scotland Road as the scheduling criteria invoked, focused on the fort and defensive elements rather than less formal Roman settlement.

Limited academic attention has been paid to the *vicus*, an area that the Roman inhabitants probably lived within and where specialist functions and services were probably provided throughout the Roman period. Located in a salient to the west of the fort and between the Wall and the Vallum the study area remains unscheduled (figure 2).

The earliest reliable map regarding the study area was the 1840 tithe map (CRO DRC 8/181) that records the field as "Near Dukes Field" and is described as open grass land, probably pasture.

No development is shown in close proximity by 1865 on the First edition Ordnance Survey map (figure 3).

The current buildings were constructed in St George's Crescent in 1893. Since 1901 the study building has been depicted on the Ordnance Survey as 14 St George's Crescent.

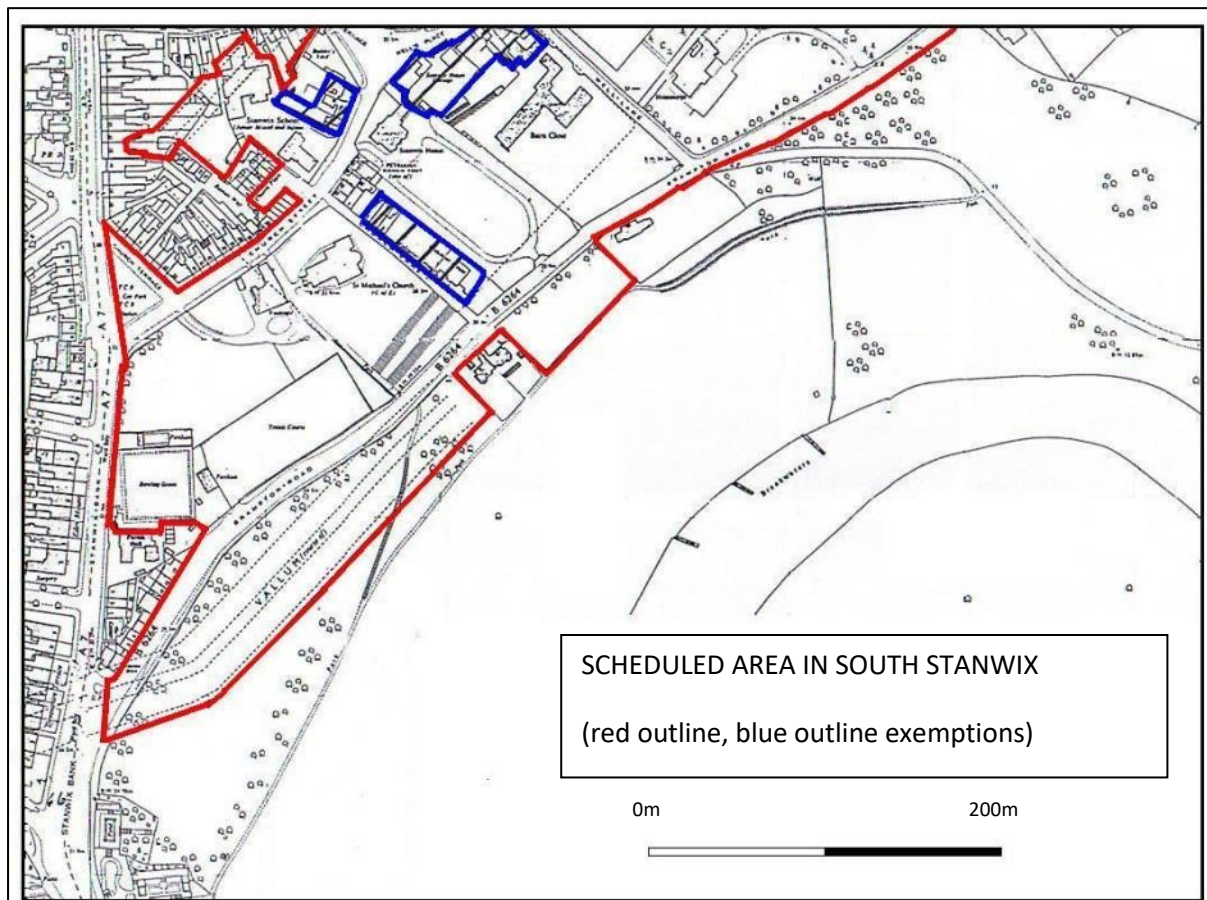


Figure 2. Scheduled area in Stanwix



Figure 3. First edition Ordnance Survey map of 1865 showing the study area.

4. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

4.1 Previous archaeological reconnaissance

The study area (NY 39885 56880) lies 65m to the west of the watching brief conducted at 2 St George's Crescent (Martin 2012), the only significant research undertaken into the Roman *vicus* at Stanwix west of Scotland Road (figure 4).

Understanding the development of the *vicus* outside of the fort has been severely handicapped by the lack of secure observations. Revisiting 19th century accounts in contemporary journals provides a fleeting glimpse of Roman settlement within the *vicus*. These accounts allude to the following:

- 28th September 1812, Cumberland Pacquet; 1.20m below the surface a capital, pillar and aquaduct were discovered in fields on Stanwix Bank belonging to the Earl of Lonsdale.
- 17th October 1815, Cumberland Pacquet; a massive column found at the Stanwix end of the newly constructed Eden Bridge.
- 19th November 1816, Cumberland Pacquet; cutting part of the bank away (presumably for the new road), four to five cart loads of human bone were discovered. A stone lined vault measuring 8ft x 4ft with flagged and clay floor was also uncovered.
- 30th June 1851, Carlisle Journal; a house built for Miss Carruthers (Eden Mount) discovered two ancient walled wells, 2.10m below the surface. Both were capped but contained red and buff Roman pottery, whilst two grindstone and an iron spear were also found. Mr Farrar's house revealed another well, producing three within the space of 40 feet (12.19m).

- A glass *phalera* (a form of medallion discovered in 1851) was probably found during this building work.

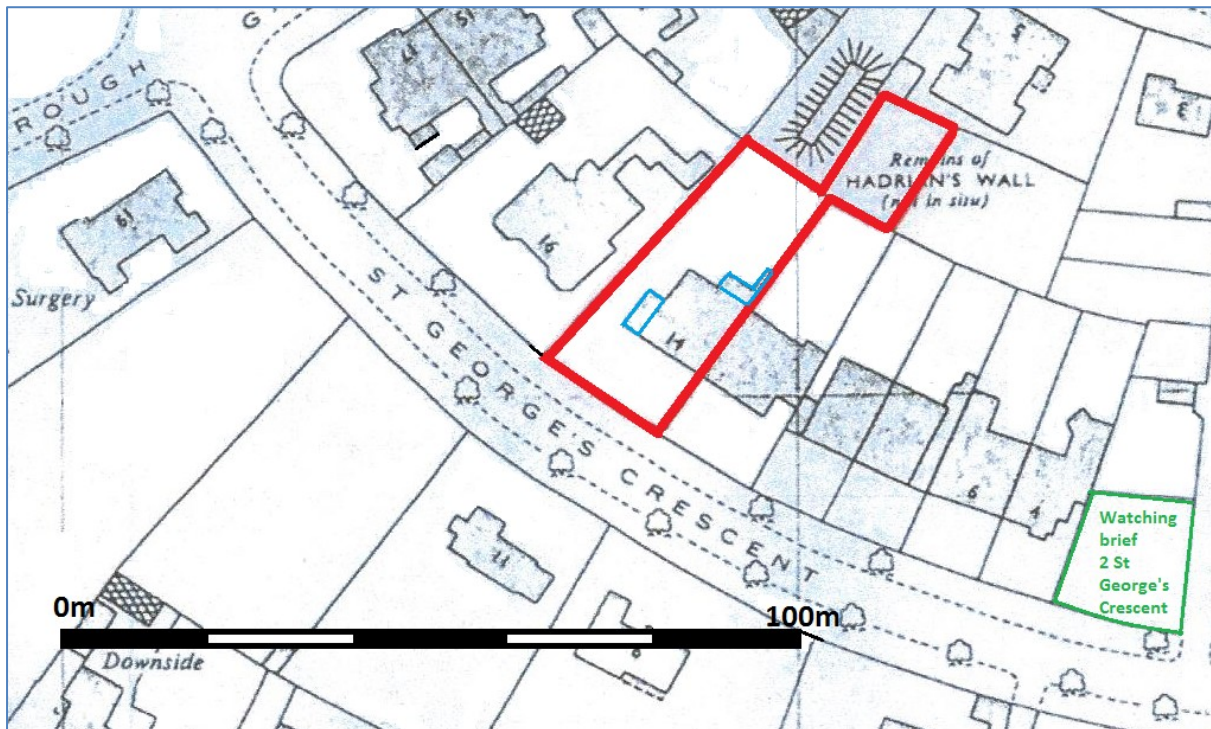


Figure 4. Curtilage of 14 St George's Crescent (red outline) showing study area (blue outline) in relation to 2 St George's Crescent (green outline)

The suggestion conferred by these accounts is of an intensively occupied settlement, noted for its apparent high status masonry buildings, conspicuous consumption and with a cemetery close by.

Indeed, it may be speculated that rather than living in the fort, officers who invariably had to be of a high social status in order to serve in the cavalry, possessed prestigious houses outside of the fort; the fort serving as a place of work rather than permanent living quarters.

The recent watching brief at 2 St George's Crescent tentatively appears to support this model.

Synopsis of the watching brief at 2 St George's Crescent

The presence of two rectilinear ditches 21 and 54 confirms that space had been ordered into a series of rectilinear plots (Phase 1) that appeared to take its axes from the presence of Hadrian's Wall aligned south-west to north-east, an act initiated in the late first century AD and apparently closed by the early second century AD.

The plot appears to have been largely vacant although truncation by later activity may have removed vestigial and trace archaeological features. Even so, cutting features produced no pottery later than the mid second century AD.

However, a substantial foundation 52 (Phase 2) in the north-east corner of the site probably confirmed the presence of a monumental building that possibly possessed a concrete floor albeit devoid of its super-structure. In size and form, this foundation would parallel the second timber fort

in Carlisle Period 4A central range (Zant 2009, 171), a building tradition that continued with the stone fort Period 6A central range (Ibid, 273).

The interior of this putative building would have been at the rear of Eden Mount, a location that 160 years ago provided high status monumental remains.

The longevity for this structure appears short, initiated no earlier than the late first century AD and abandoned by the early second century. Indeed, the building may have been planned but the super-structure never completed.

A programme of pit digging 42 (Phase 4), 45 and 50 (Phase 5) appears to have then occurred following the demise of the adjacent masonry building. A high concentration of Roman pottery was discarded during the early to mid-second century AD, yet contained forms typical of the late first century to early second century AD period (context 20).

Pit 45 may have possessed some structural character e.g. as a submerged building, but secure interpretation is likely to remain elusive. Intriguingly, this feature was devoid of pottery that tentatively suggests that this was not a formal rubbish pit but possessed a specific function rapidly backfilled when it became redundant.

Cut 50 appears to have been a cess pit but closed prior to the installation of a probable narrow wall resting above foundation 10 (Phase 6).

Foundation 10 (Phase 6) may represent a building but as no return walls were encountered there exists some doubt regarding this interpretation. Pottery recovered again suggests an early to mid-second century AD date for deposition.

The discovery of these deposits confirms that extensive Roman extra-mural settlement existed west of the fort possibly occupying the entire salient enclosed by Hadrian's Wall, returning as the bluff occupied by Hyssop's Bank, the River Eden and the Vallum.

All deposits appear to fit within a tight stratigraphic window perhaps no more than one hundred years in longevity and consistent, albeit slightly earlier with the 120-180 AD date range recovered at Miles MacInness Hall (Carauna 2000, 55-78) and the 120-170 AD date range suggested by the earlier evaluation (Whitehead 2010, 11-13).

Explaining the demise of the area at a relatively early Roman date may be an action coincidental with initial advancement of the Roman frontier to the line of the Antonine Wall and the redeployment of the army, leading to temporary withdrawal from Stanwix.

Circa 160 AD appears to be central to understanding this area.

Firstly, there was the consolidation of the frontier and the return to the former Hadrianic frontier with the introduction of the stone wall (Hadrian's Wall) *circa* 160 AD (McCarthy, 1999, 163).

Secondly, Stanwix fort was enlarged with the arrival of the *Ala Petriana* cavalry unit *circa* 160 AD (Symonds & Mason 2009, 92), newly stationed to the fort.

Thirdly, a policy of military expansion becomes redundant, the default political position being a holding operation, although extra-mural trade and social relations probably continued e.g. the possible market facility at 54 Scotland Road (Martin 2009).

All these actions probably contributed to substantial spatial re-organisation leading to abandonment or down-sizing of the earlier *vicus* or quite possibly its relocation to benign territory north of the Wall.

4.2 Historic Environment Record

The Historic Environment Record listed the following relevant entries (figure 5):

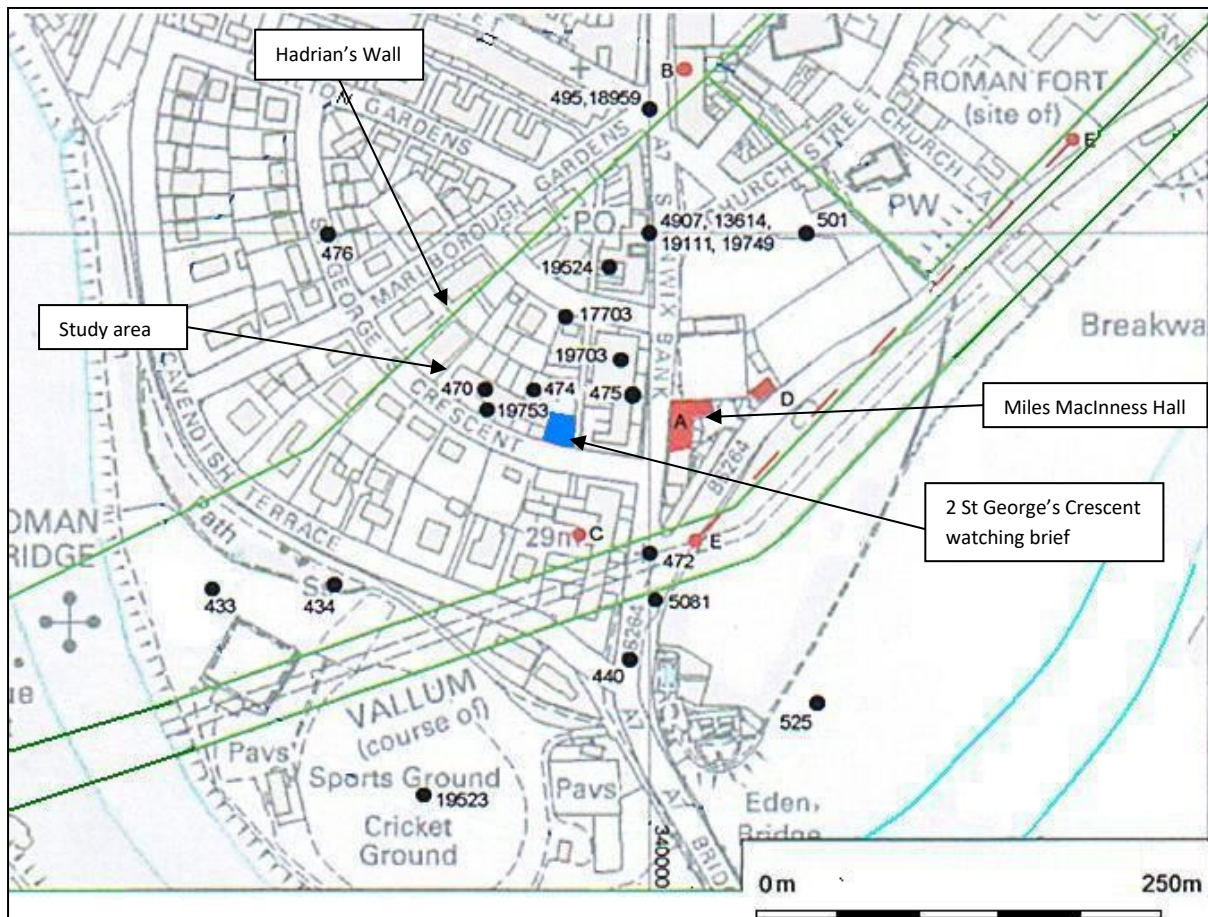


Figure 5. Location of study area and previous find spots

- HER 433, Hadrian' Wall Milecastle 66
- HER 434, Hyssops Bank Roman cemetery
- HER 440, a Roman pillar
- HER 470, carved stone
- HER 472, carved stone
- HER 474, altar
- HER 475, Roman medal find
- HER 476, statue find
- HER 501, Roman architectural and altar finds
- HER 525, Bronze Age axe find
- HER 4907, Roman vault

- HER 5081, Carlisle-Newcastle Military Road
- HER 13614 Anglian cross
- HER 17703 Roman coin finds including those dating to the Antonine period
- HER 18959 Roman fountain described as Post-Medieval
- HER 19111 Roman coin
- HER 19523 Roman pottery, Edenside Cricket Ground
- HER 19524 Roman pottery, Eden Mount
- HER 19703 Weight find, Post-Medieval
- HER 19749 Iron chisel, date unknown
- HER 19753 two hump back bridges near Harby Brow, date unknown

The closest find appears to be a carved stone HER 470 with numerous other Roman stone artefacts and small finds nearby. The entry for HER 19753 a hump back bridge is an entry error.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Methodology

The objective of the watching brief investigation was to carry out a formal programme of archaeological observations and investigations during any operations on site that may disturb or destroy archaeological or architecturally informative deposits or remains. The specific aims of the work were to:

- Provide a record of those works associated with the removal of the topsoil
- Provide a record of any significant archaeological or architectural features encountered by intrusive activities

In order to achieve these objectives, a record of all archaeological informative deposits encountered during the ground operations were made consisting of detailed context records on individual proforma sheets and field drawings, according to the protocols set out in the GMA manual.

The ground-works were undertaken by machine under archaeological supervision. This action consisted of observation of the spoil removal.

5.2 Results

The development (figure 6) involved the rebuilding of a kitchen (Area 1), an annex (Area 2) and the insertion of a drain (Area 3).

Two former brick buildings (figures 7 and 8) were demolished and the concrete slab removed prior to the insertion of the new foundation trenches.

Extraneous rubble was removed before the footings were cut by a small tracked mini-digger.

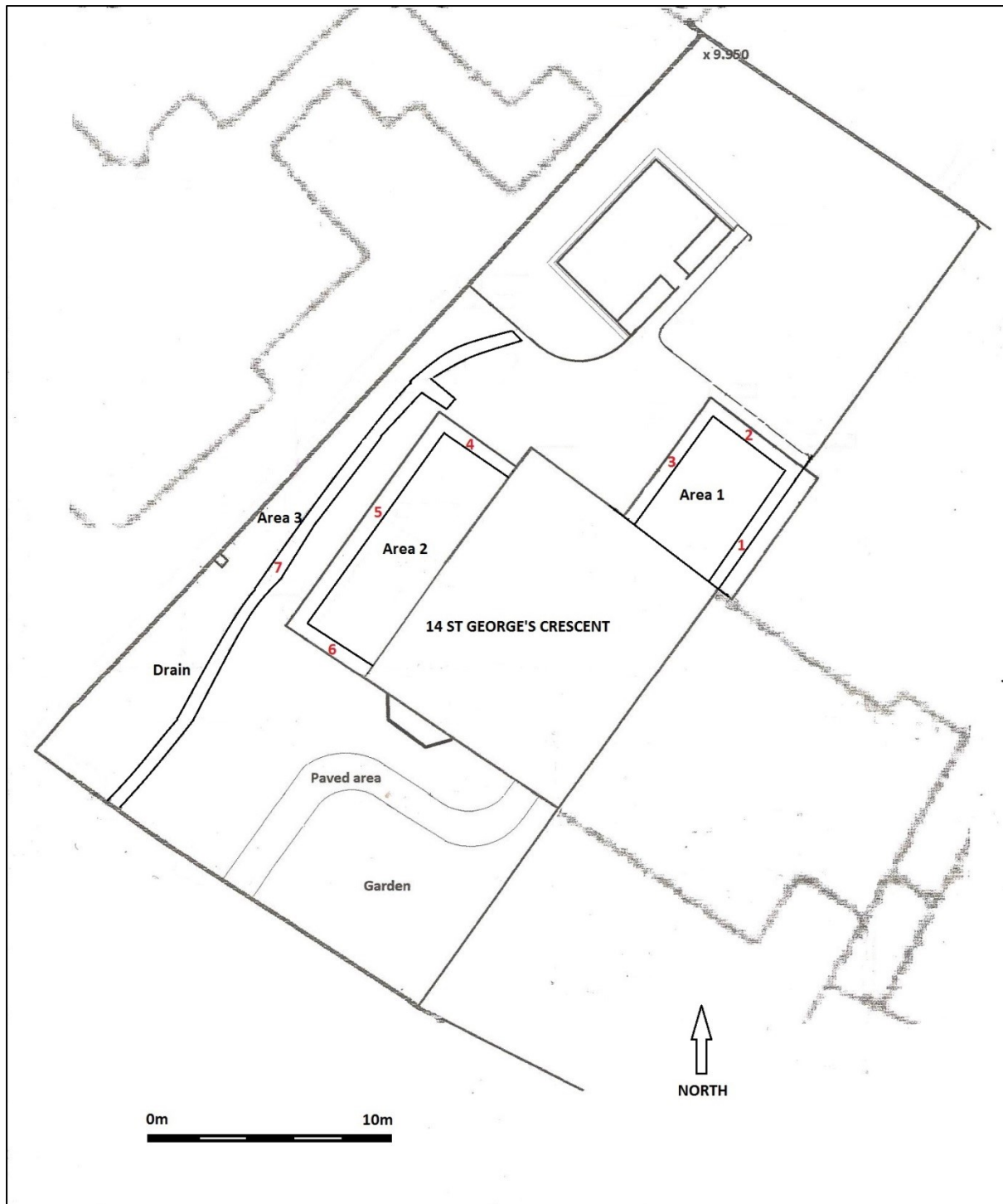


Figure 6. Ground plan illustrating the building footprint

Area 1

The stratigraphic sequence observed in Area 1 consisted of orange-brown clay sand that represented natural drift geology overlain by brown sandy silt and building debris forming topsoil beneath a concrete slab measuring 0.25m in thickness. The area within the footprint was archaeologically sterile.



Figure 7. Former kitchen in Area 1



Figure 8. Former outbuilding and concrete drive

The foundation trenches within Area 1 were as follows:

- Trench 1 measured 5.90m in length x 0.40m in width and 0.50m in depth aligned approximately north-south
- Trench 2 measured 5.25m in length x 0.60m in width and 0.50m in depth aligned approximately north-south
- Trench 3 measured 6.25m in length x 0.60m in width and 0.50m in depth aligned approximately east-west



Figure 9. Trench 1, Area 1



Figure 10. Trench 3, Area 1

Area 2

The stratigraphic sequence observed in Area 2 consisted of pink sandy clay that developed into light brown clay to the south. This natural drift geology was overlain by heavily disturbed brown sandy silt and building debris forming topsoil beneath brick overburden up to 0.40m in thickness. The area within the footprint was archaeologically sterile with a greater depth of overburden towards the existing house.

The foundation trenches within Area 2 were as follows:

- Trench 4 measured 4.10m in length x 0.60m in width and 0.60m in depth aligned approximately east-west

- Trench 5 measured 11.10m in length x 0.60m in width and 0.70m in depth aligned approximately north-south
- Trench 6 measured 4.10m in length x 0.60m in width and 0.70m in depth aligned approximately east-west



Figure 11. Trench 4, Area 2



Figure 12. Trench 6, Area 2



Figure 13. Trench 5, Area 2



Figure 14. Trench 7, Area 3

Area 3

The stratigraphic sequence observed in Area 3 consisted of pink sandy clay that developed into light brown clay to the south. This natural drift geology was overlain by heavily disturbed brown sandy silt and building debris forming topsoil. The area within the footprint was archaeologically sterile.

Trench 7 measured 26.00m in length x 0.70m in width and 0.60m in depth.

5.3 Finds and ecofacts

No finds were present and no deposits warranted environmental sampling.

5.4 Discussion

All the interventions observed during the watching brief proved to be archaeologically sterile.

A sequence of disturbed garden soil mixed with building debris suggested that the ground had been cleared with the advent of house construction in 1893.

The presence of further building debris closer to the current ground surface, probably represented hard core or displacement of building debris for former outbuildings.

No sub-surface features including ditches or post-holes were encountered.

No cobbled or pebbly spreads were present.

No pottery even within a residual deposit was observed.

The conclusion based on the above evidence suggests that Roman settlement did not extend westwards as far as 14 St George's Crescent.



Figure 15. Disposition of known Roman spatial assets in Stanwix

The simplest explanation for this spatial organisation was the close proximity of Hadrian's Wall to the north-west (figure 15).

A clearance zone between the Wall and settlement probably existed in order to maintain the integrity of the defences including exclusion of potential targets and providing clear division between military and "civilian" space (figure 15).

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to David and Margaret MacLennan, the clients for their collaboration on this project.

Thanks are also due to the contractors for allowing the fieldwork to be conducted expeditiously and to my colleague Jo Beaty for monitoring the insertion of the drain.

I would also like to thank Jeremy Parsons (CCCHES) for his guidance with the archaeological brief, the staff of Carlisle Library with my research into the local history of the area and the staff of Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle with the map regression and other documentary research.

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