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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-TOP ASSESSMENT
OF THE FORMER CAMAS FACTORY SITE,
BRIDGE ROAD, BROMPTON-ON-SWALE,
NORTH YORKSHIRE

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY LTD.

An Archaeological Desk-Top Assessment of the former CAMAS Factory site, Bridge Road, Brompton-on-Swale, North Yorkshire

Central National Grid Reference: SE 2254 9953

Written and Researched by Mark Randerson Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, November 2000

Revised by Jennifer Proctor and Robin Taylor-Wilson Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, April 2001

Project Manager: Robin Taylor-Wilson

Commissioning Client:
Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners
Floor D, Milburn House
Dean Street
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
NE1 1LY

Tel: 0191 261 5605

Contractor:
Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
(Northern Office)
10 Dryburn Park
Durham
DH1 5AD

Tel: 0191 383 1359

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1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 1.1 This Desk-Top Assessment has been commissioned by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners, on behalf of Durham Estates Limited, as part of a planning application process to North Yorkshire County Council, in respect of a proposed development of the former CAMAS factory site, Bridge Road, Brompton-on-Swale, North Yorkshire. An outline application has been submitted (May 2000) to the Council seeking to establish the principle of residential development on the site.
- 1.2 This Desk-Top Assessment was researched and written between August and November 2000 by Mark Randerson of Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited and revised in April 2001 by Jennifer Proctor and Robin Taylor-Wilson of Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited.
- 1.3 The study site is roughly sub-rectangular in shape, bounded to the north by Bridge Road, to the east by Gatherley Road, to the west by the A1, and to the south by open ground.
- 1.4 The National Grid Reference for the centre of the proposed development is SE 2254 9953. It immediately adjacent to land parcels within the Scheduled Ancient Monument, Cataractonium Roman station.
- 1.5 The western part of the study site is currently occupied by the derelict CAMAS factory buildings and associated hardstanding. The eastern part of the study site is rough grassland and contains no standing buildings.
- The archaeological potential for early and late prehistoric remains is considered overall to be moderate. The potential for Roman remains is considered to be very high. The potential for Anglo-Saxon remains is considered to be very high and for medieval remains it is considered to be low. The potential for post-medieval remains is considered to be low.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 General

- 2.1.1 This Desk-Top Assessment has been commissioned by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (hereinafter the Client), on behalf of Durham Estates Limited, in advance of a proposed development of the former CAMAS factory site, Bridge Road, Brompton-on-Swale.
- 2.1.2 The site of the proposed development covers an area of approximately 3.62 hectares (Figure
 1). It is situated immediately adjacent to land parcels within the Scheduled Ancient Monument,
 Cataractonium Roman station.¹
- 2.1.3 Because of the location of the site and its perceived archaeological potential a written assessment report of the likely archaeological impact of the proposed development is required in order to assist the planning application. This may be followed by a requirement for further archaeological works.
- 2.1.4 This Desk-Top Assessment has been carried out in accordance with the 'Written Scheme of Investigation: Archaeological Desk-Top Assessment For Residential Development At NGR SE 2254 9953', prepared by The Heritage Unit of North Yorkshire County Council.² The Desk-Top Assessment was researched and written between August and November 2000 by Mark Randerson of Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (hereinafter PCA). Following discussions between PCA and the Client, revisions to the text and figures were undertaken by Jennifer Proctor and Robin Taylor-Wilson of PCA in April 2001.
- 2.1.5 The site lies to the south-east of the village of Brompton-on-Swale, approximately 100m north of the River Swale and immediately east of the A1 trunk road. Approximately two-thirds of the total area, on the western side of the site, is currently occupied by the 2-3 storey derelict buildings of the former CAMAS factory. The remaining area, lying to the east, is currently under pasture and does not contain any standing buildings.
- 2.1.6 This Desk-Top Assessment was completed following a visit to the site and searches of documentary and cartographic sources to ascertain the archaeological and historical background of the application area, and to assess the potential for survival of archaeological deposits.

2.2 Site Location

- 2.2.1 The site lies on the south-eastern side of the village of Brompton-on-Swale. The central National Grid Reference is SE 2254 9953 (Figure 1).
- 2.2.2 The site occupies a roughly sub-rectangular parcel of land, bounded to the north by Bridge Road, to the east by Gatherley Road, to the west by the A1, and to the south by open ground (Figure 2).

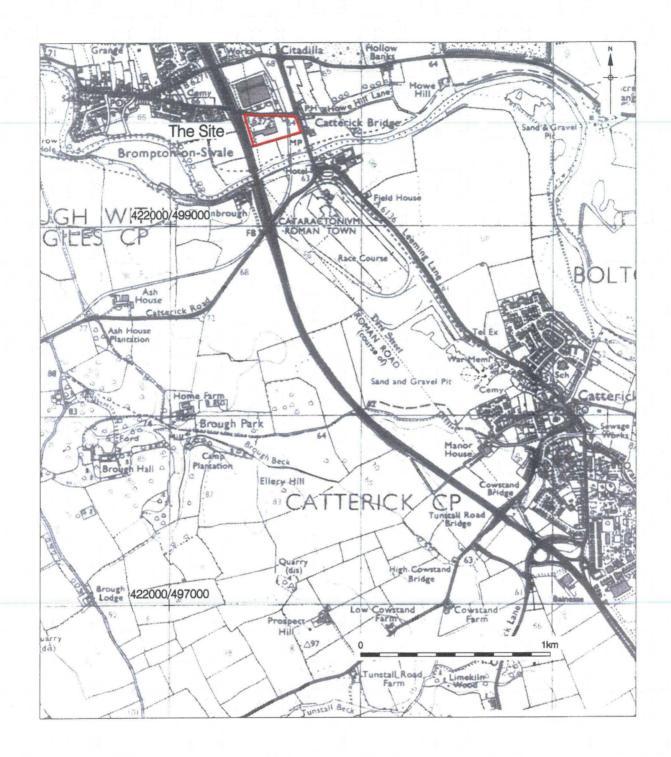
¹ SAM NY 169.

² North Yorkshire County Council, 2000.

2.3 Planning Background

- 2.3.1 The proposed area of development at the site of the former CAMAS factory, Bridge Road, Brompton-on-Swale, covers an area of approximately 3.62 hectares. The Client seeks full planning permission for a residential development. An outline application has been submitted (May 2000) to the Council seeking to establish the principle of residential development on the site.
- 2.3.2 This Desk-Top Assessment of the site's archaeological potential has been commissioned by the Client as part of the planning application process. Because of the site's location one of the conditions which will be applied to the application will be a consideration of archaeology. Desk-Top Assessments are often used, as in this case, to form a baseline consideration of the archaeological potential of a particular site or development area. Their compilation allows an assessment to be made of the impact of a proposed development on the potential archaeological resource.
- 2.3.3 The need for early consultation in the planning process in order to determine the impact of development schemes upon the archaeological resource is identified in 'Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: 'Archaeology and Planning' (PPG 16)'.² The Heritage Unit of North Yorkshire County Council is responsible for monitoring planning applications and identifying instances that require archaeological mitigation. The Heritage Unit was responsible for the preparation of a Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological Desk-Top Assessment with regard to the proposed development at the CAMAS factory site.
- 2.3.4 The results of this Desk-Top Assessment will be used to make an informed decision on the necessity, or otherwise, for an archaeological mitigation strategy in relation to the proposed development.
- 2.3.5 Where there is potential for important remains on a site, which may merit preservation in situ, then the results of an archaeological field evaluation will, if feasible, be required prior to the determination of a planning application. Forms of archaeological field evaluation include surface artefact collection ('field walking'), geophysical survey, trial trenching/test pitting and/or auger survey.
- 2.3.6 Where field evaluation reveals important archaeological remains, their protection and preservation in situ will be the primary objective. This can be achieved, in the first instance, by modification of the development proposals.
- 2.3.7 Where important archaeological remains cannot be preserved, or where remains do not merit preservation, then the County Council will use planning conditions to ensure excavation and recording of the remains prior to the development, i.e. preservation by record.

² Department of the Environment 1990.



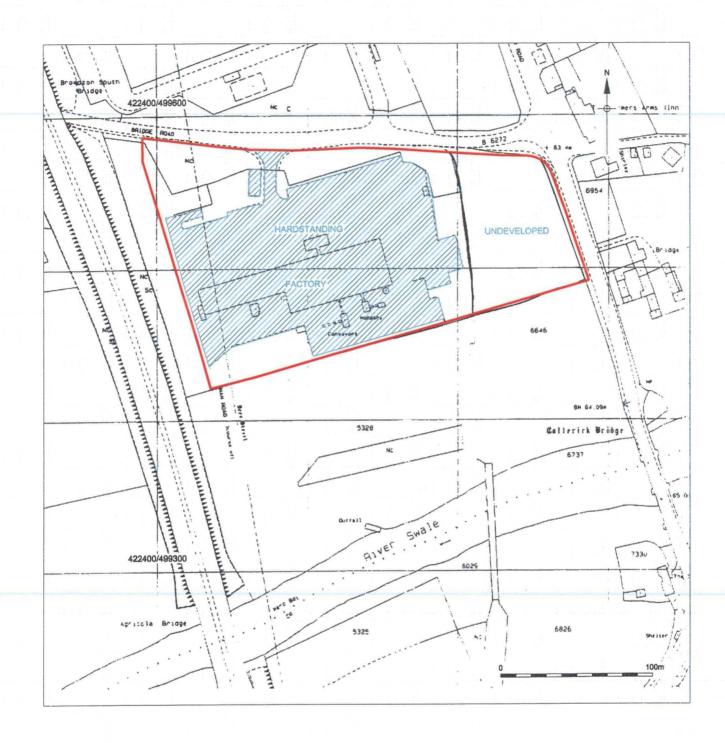


Figure 2
The Study Area showing developed areas or hard standing
Scale 1:2,500

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The broad aims of the archaeological assessment, as outlined in the aforementioned Written Scheme of Investigation, are to:
 - · identify the impact of the proposed development upon the historic environment;
 - · identify parts of the study site which may require further archaeological work;
 - formulate recommendations for any further archaeological work considered necessary to inform the planning decision.
- 3.2 More specifically, four main fields of study are to be considered in greater detail, arising from the location of the site and its relation to the river crossing:
 - the extent to which archaeological remains survive relating to Dere Street, the Roman road known to cross the site;
 - the exact form and location of the bridgehead defences surrounding the Roman bridge on the north bank of the River Swale;
 - the size, character, and nature of the late Roman suburb on the north bank of the River Swale;
 - the location and extent of the subsequent Anglian settlement.

4. METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 A field visit was made on the 10th August 2000 to examine the site. The visit enabled a visual appraisal of the site to be made, and also provided an opportunity to assess the potential of the site for non-destructive data-gathering, such as surface artefact collection and geophysical survey.
- 4.2 The following documentary, cartographic and photographic sources were examined at North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton:
 - North Yorkshire County Sites and Monuments Record (hereinafter SMR). Information
 contained in relevant SMR entries forms the framework for the site's archaeological
 and historical background, as set out below in Section 6. The full SMR entries appear
 in Appendix A to this report.
 - North Yorkshire County List of Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
 - North Yorkshire Aerial Photography archive.
 - Reports relating to watching briefs undertaken close to, or on, the study site.
 - An assessment of the 'Thubron Archives'. These archives comprise the written, drawn and photographic records of the former Richmond Excavation Group, who undertook a series of open-area excavations in the area of the study site in the late 1960's and early 1970's. These included small-scale excavations within the bounds of the study site, and a watching brief during the construction of the factory buildings.
- 4.3 The following cartographic and documentary sources were examined at the North Yorkshire County Records Office, Northallerton:
 - The historical map sequence depicting North Yorkshire in general, and the Bromptonon-Swale area in particular. This sequence began with two maps detailing the lands of Rodger Strickland in 1739, and ended with the Ordnance Survey maps of 1857, 1913, 1928, and 1930.
- 4.4 The following individuals were contacted to ascertain if they could provide additional information concerning the study site:
 - Pete Wilson (English Heritage).
 - Shirley Thubron (Richmond Excavation Group).
 - · Rosemary Cramp (University of Durham).
- These individuals have extensive archaeological knowledge of the area. Pete Wilson provided a very useful background perspective of the site. Shirley Thubron provided a great deal of information (Figure 6), allowed access to the original records and site notebooks from excavations and watching briefs in the area of the study site, and joined the author on a site tour. PCA is greatly indebted to her for this valuable input. Rosemary Cramp commented upon the collection of carved stones in the local church and churchyard.

5. GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

5.1 Geology

- 5.1.1 The 'solid' geology of the Catterick area is divided into roughly two main groups of deposits, divided on a roughly north-south axis. To the west of the area, Lower Magnesian Limestone deposits predominate, with Carboniferous Limestone strata encountered further east. The 'drift' geology is more mixed, with boulder clays, river gravels, and alluvial deposits recorded.
- 5.1.2 The site lies approximately 200m north of the River Swale. To the south-west of the study area, beyond the Swale, the area of the Roman town of *Cataractonium* is positioned on boulder clay, which extends eastwards away from the site. To the west of this, and into the study area, river gravels begin to dominate the makeup of the drift strata, mixed with undifferentiated alluvial deposits. The soils encountered on the north bank of the Swale are of the Wick 1 association, a soil type regarded as being appropriate for agricultural activity, but not of the greatest quality.³

5.2 Topography

- 5.2.1 At the time of the field visit the majority of the western portion of the study site was occupied by the former CAMAS factory buildings. Other structures and extensive hardstanding associated with this building were also extant (Plates 1 and 2). The eastern portion of the site was an area of undeveloped waste ground showing some signs of landscaping, and crossed by service trenches in the north. The western part of the site, approximately two-thirds of the total area, is divided from the eastern part by a linear embankment and a line of broken-down chain-link fencing.
- 5.2.2 The site is generally flat, evidently mainly due to landscaping during the construction of the factory buildings. A slight overall slope is noticeable when viewing the site, as the land falls away gently to the south towards the river. Small embankments c.1m high run along the frontage with Bridge Road, while a more pronounced bank skirts the site's southern boundary. The hardstanding to the south of the factory buildings lies c.1m lower than the undeveloped rough ground to the south of the study site, providing some indication of the level of horizontal truncation that occurred during the construction of the factory. The hardstanding to the north of the factory is crossed by east-west orientated drains and service trenches, but these appear to be fairly localised. Beyond the hardstanding to the west of the factory, the ground rises sharply up to the A1 embankment, which stands c.9m higher than ground level within the western part of the site. To the east of this bank, a north-south orientated flume trench skirts the study site. A strip of land immediately to the west of the flume trench remains at original, pre-development levels, and is thought to be untruncated.

³ Wilson, 1996.

⁴ Thubron, pers. comm.

⁵ Thubron, pers. comm.

- 5.2.3 To the east of the derelict factory buildings and its associated hardstanding, an area of rough grassland slopes gently downwards as it extends south towards the river (Plate 4). This portion of the site may also have been previously levelled, as the ground rises noticeably towards the adjacent road on the site's northern and eastern boundaries. The northern part of the grassland is crossed with service trenches running on an east-west orientation. Apart from an irregular plinth-like earthwork, which is evidently derived from a railway that ran close to the site's eastern boundary, no other evidence of landscaping or development was evident in this area at the time of the site visit.
- 5.2.4 There were two main topographical features of note on the site at the time of the visit. The first was a linear embankment, observed crossing the site on a roughly north-south orientation, effectively separating the developed western area of the site from the undeveloped eastern area. It runs northwards from the remains of the iron railway bridge crossing the river and appeared to consist predominantly of compressed clinker and other industrial detritus. This embankment, which represents the remains of a dismantled railway, stands c.1.5m high at the southern boundary of the site.
- 5.2.5 The second feature of note was a north-south orientated earthwork adjacent to the southern boundary of the study site, to the south of the factory hardstanding. The feature appears to have been truncated by the insertion of the hardstanding (Plate 3). This earthwork bank, standing c.0.4m above contemporary ground level, evidently represents the Dere Street Roman road. It would appear, therefore, that within the study site, Dere Street has been severely truncated by the construction of the factory. Although partially truncated, the remains of the Roman road are also known to be preserved within the study site to the north of the factory area, with the very northern limits protected by the embankment facing onto Bridge Road.⁶

⁶ Thubron, pers. comm.

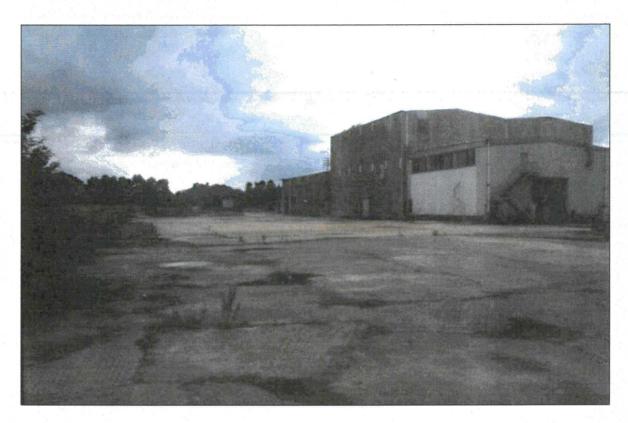


Plate 1 Front of CAMAS factory (from the West)

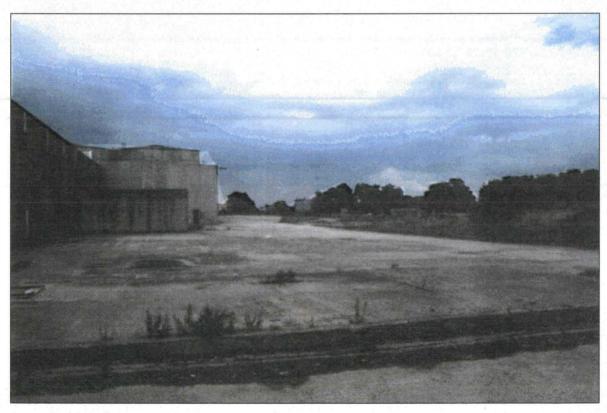


Plate 2 Rear of CAMAS factory (from the West)



Plate 3
Earthwork to South-West of CAMAS factory (from the East)

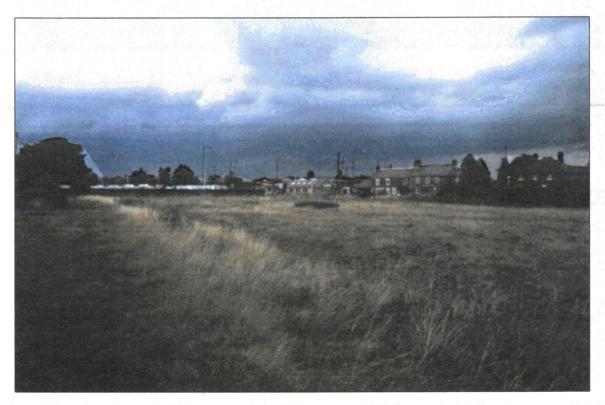


Plate 4 Undeveloped Eastern portion of the Site (from the South)

6. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 In order to assess the archaeological potential of the study site, an examination was made of the North Yorkshire County SMR. Entries located in the immediate vicinity of the area of proposed development were examined. Entries relating to the Roman fort and town in the area to the south of the River Swale were not examined as this area was considered to have been covered by data examined elsewhere. Rough boundaries of Bridge Road, Gatherley Road, the A1, and the River Swale were used to limit the SMR search to information directly relating to the study area. However, the area of the Scheduled Ancient Monument, *Cataractonium* Roman station, extends north of the River Swale to include parcels of land immediately to the west of the development site on the other side of the A1 and the parcel of land immediately to the south of the development site, this lying within the defined study area. SMR information has been supplemented by other archaeological, documentary and cartographic sources, as outlined above.
- 6.1.2 It is not the purpose of this study to set out a comprehensive history of land use in the vicinity of Brompton-on-Swale, or of the town of Catterick. The broad intention of the search is simply to predict and extrapolate likely archaeological conditions within the study area from finds and research in the vicinity. Analysis of archaeological discoveries made nearby is important, as is a thorough examination of the historical and archaeological records relating to the site. Finds and sites entered onto the SMR are at best a small and unrepresentative sample of the total buried heritage.
- 6.1.3 Three previous excavations have been undertaken in the immediate vicinity of the study area.

 These have been given unique site codes, to aid in their location within the general environs of Catterick (Figure 3). These excavations are:
 - Site 240, located between the southern boundary of the study site and the River Swale, between the disused railway and Gatherley Road. This excavation also extended four trenches northwards, actually into the undeveloped eastern portion of the study area.
 - Site 434, located to the south of the CAMAS factory building, and positioned on the southern side of the south-western corner of the site. This area lay eastwards of the A1, and roughly over the line of Dere Street.
 - Site 511, which comprised a series of trenches running parallel to the eastern side of the A1, and extending from the western end of the factory building to the north bank of the Swale.
- 6.1.4 Where practical, features exposed by these excavations have been referred to by their site codes or by name, rather than by quoting the relevant SMR reference number. This approach has been adopted in order to minimise confusion within these areas. The authors of the relevant reports are credited in all instances. Individual 'stray' finds are given an SMR reference, as are major features.

6.1.5 Time scales used in this section:

Prehistoric

Palaeolithic

450,000-12,000 BC 12,000-4,000 BC

Mesolithic Neolithic

4,000–2,300 BC

Bronze Age

2,300-700 BC

Iron Age

700 BC-A.D. 43

Historic

Roman

A.D. 43-410

Anglo-Saxon

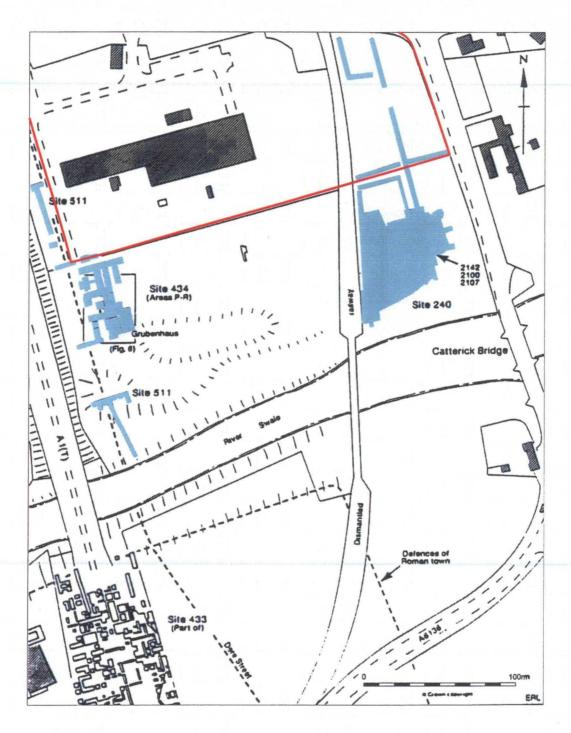
A.D. 410-1066

Medieval

A.D. 1066-1485

Post-medieval

A.D. 1486-present



After Wilson 1996



Figure 3
Previous archaeological work in the vicinity of the Study Area
Scale 1:2,500

6.2 Prehistoric (Figure 4)

- 6.2.1 It seems probable that a north-south orientated trackway has existed in the Catterick area from prehistoric times, with settlement activity recorded from later prehistoric periods. A Neolithic cairn has been excavated to the south of the racecourse, between the River Swale and the modern town, and it is thought that a Neolithic henge monument lies under the racecourse itself. Additionally, a *cursus*, or ritual avenue, lies to the north-east of the site at Scorton, and prehistoric pit alignments and a cobble covered barrow were recorded at the Hollow Banks quarry, closer to the north-east, on the eastern side of Gatherley Road.
- 6.2.2 In spite of previous archaeological work there are no recorded discoveries of prehistoric material from the Palaeolithic through to the Neolithic within the immediate boundaries of the study site, although a flint core, suitable for making stone tools, is recorded as deriving from close by.⁹ However, this small amount of evidence could reflect a lack of study, rather than a lack of prehistoric activity from these periods, given that most analyses of the area have focused on Roman and Anglian settlement in and around Catterick.
- 6.2.2 The archaeological potential for the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods is considered to be **low**. However, for the Neolithic period, the close proximity of the site to a both a henge and a cursus monument, a probable north-south trackway, as well as a barrow and a cairn, suggests that the site lies within a substantial Neolithic landscape. Given this possibility, the archaeological potential for the Neolithic period is judged to be **moderate** to **high**.
- 6.2.3 A middle to late Bronze Age rapier was recovered from the topsoil in the vicinity of the Catterick Bridge gauging station to the south-east of the CAMAS factory site in 1993. Given the paucity of other evidence for the period it seems unlikely that this artefact represents evidence for any form of settlement and it is more likely to be a stray find. However the ritual deposition of weapons in river or riverside locations is a recognised feature of the prehistoric period in general, and this find may therefore reflect the importance of the area during the Bronze Age. The overall potential for the survival of Bronze Age archaeological deposits within the study area is, however, considered to be **low**.
- 6.2.4 North Yorkshire as a whole evidently witnessed a dramatic phase of land-use change during the Late Iron Age and Romano-British periods as extensive forest clearance was undertaken.¹² Two small Iron Age settlements are known from the area surrounding Brompton-on-Swale. Both lie to the south of the river, one on the southern side of the racecourse, the other further to the south at Pallett Hill.¹³ Another Iron Age or early Romano-British enclosure is known to the north-east of the site, again at Hollow Banks quarry.¹⁴ It is most probable that the entire area was irregularly covered with small, self-sufficient farmsteads in the Iron Age, all individual units of the tribe of the *Brigantes*.

⁷ Smith, 1995; Moloney, 1998.

⁸ NYCC Heritage Unit, 2000.

⁹ Wilson, 1994.

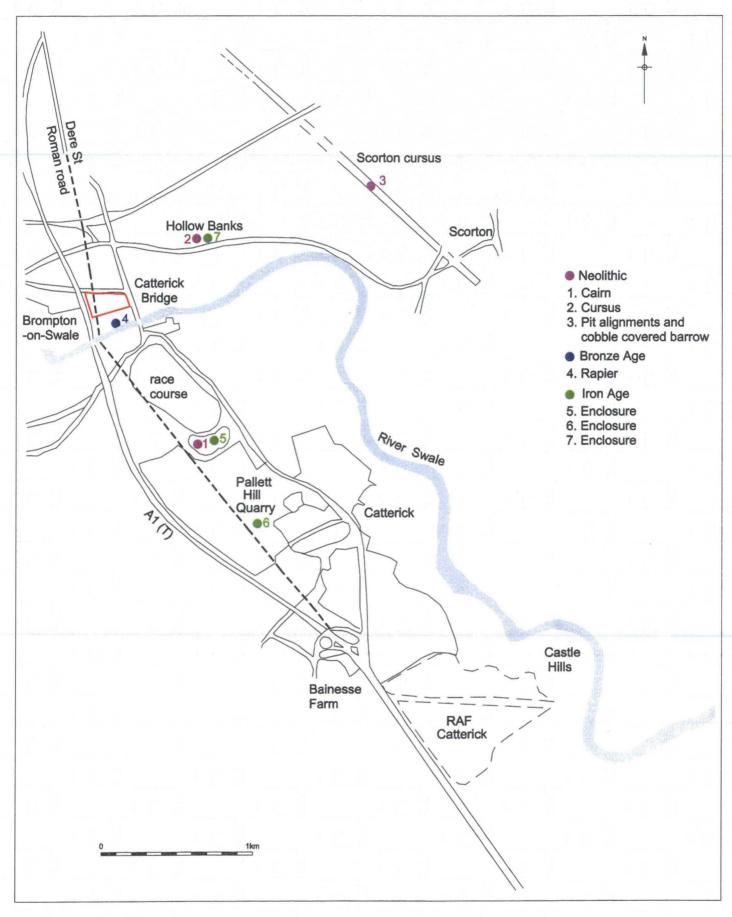
¹⁰ SMR 13511.00001.

¹¹ Bradley, 1990.

¹² Higham 1986.

¹³ Moloney, 1998.

¹⁴ NYCC Heritage Unit, 2000.



Based on C Moloney 1998

Figure 4
Prehistoric findspots in the vicinity of the Study Area
Scale 1:25,000

6.2.5 However, the SMR contains no record of Iron Age finds from within the study site or its immediate environs, which could possibly indicate a lack of activity within the study site or could indicate a gap in the record for this area. In general, the archaeological potential for Iron Age remains within the study area is judged to be **moderate**.

6.3 Roman (Figure 5)

- 6.3.1 The district surrounding the study area has a rich Roman history, with the remains of the Roman settlement of *Cataractonium* lying to the south of the site, immediately beyond the Swale. The Scheduled Ancient Monument, *Cataractonium Roman* station, ¹⁶ encompasses extensive areas either side of the A1 south of the Swale but also includes parcels of land north of the river, as describe above, including the area immediately to the south of the study site. Area.
- 6.3.2 Roman occupation initially took the form of a fort on the south bank of the Swale, built during the Agricolan Period (A.D. 78-84/5), with a *vicus* (civilian settlement) rapidly established to the east of the fortifications. It is assumed that this fort was placed to control the river crossing. The settlement straddles Dere Street on the southern bank of the River Swale, and appears to have followed the basic form of many such similar townships. *Vici* settlements are a common feature associated with many forts, housing the basic amenities and the camp followers that any army attracts. Many subsequently grew into more substantial, 'official', towns such as York and Lincoln.¹⁷
- 6.3.3 The northern suburb of the town appears to have developed at a rather later date. The *vicus* was deserted in the early 2nd century, and the fort abandoned some time around A.D. 120. A *mansio* (posting-house) was constructed overlapping the buildings of the fort, indicating that this area of the road was not only still important, but also well travelled. On the northern bank of the river, a series of fortifications were constructed, most probably to serve as defences for the bridgehead crossing the Swale. This area was occupied into the 3rd century, although the defences appear to have initially been constructed during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian.¹⁸
- 6.3.4 The bridgehead defences described above have been previously observed crossing the area of the study site. While there is some debate over their exact form, it is generally agreed that a series of concentric ditches of sub-rectangular plan centre on the crossing-point of the river. Pete Wilson of English Heritage argues that the actual plan of the defences occupies a small area, based on a series of geophysical traces in the area to the south of the site and on the remains observed during the excavation of Site 240. However, Professor John Wacher proposes that a far larger area is enclosed by these defences, extrapolating an outline of four concentric ditches from evidence of ditch sections recorded along the eastern side of the current A1 (Figure 5). A Roman temple building was excavated within the boundary of these ditches directly to the south of the study site (Site 434).

¹⁶ SAM NY 169.

¹⁷ Frere, 1967; Wacher, 1974.

¹⁸ A.D. 117–138.

¹⁹ Wilson, Jones and Evans, 1984; Wilson, 1998.

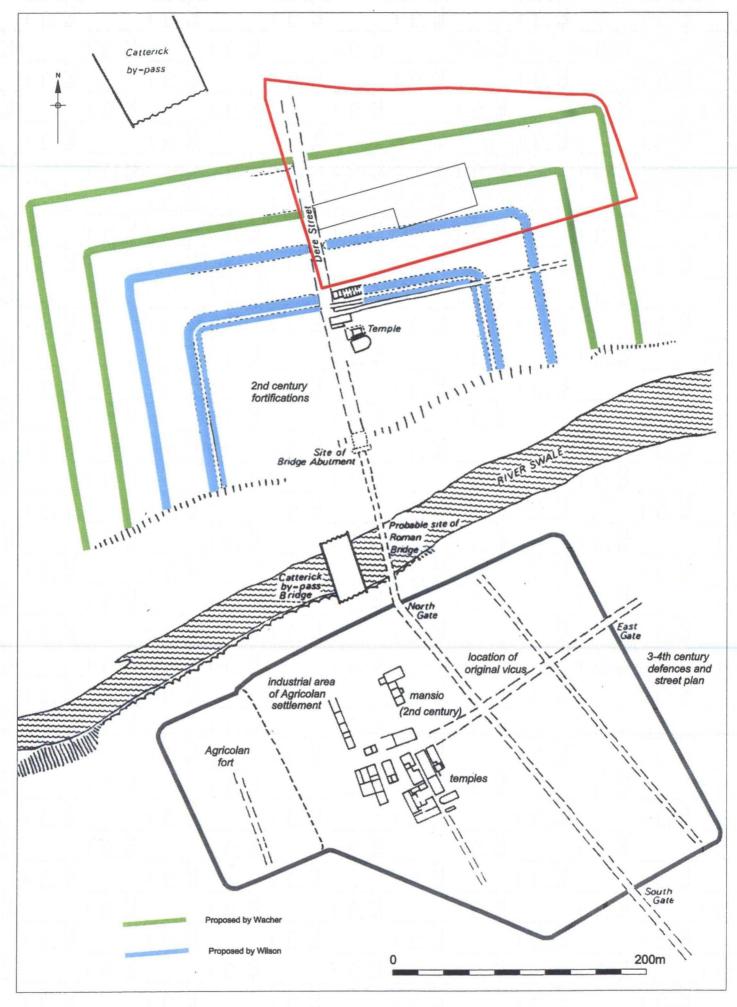


Figure 5
The Study Area in relation to the Bridgehead Defences, Roman Town and Fort Scale :1:3000

- 6.3.5 No evidence for Wacher's larger form of defensive ditches was observed during the excavation of Site 240, to the east of the factory area. However, east—west orientated ditches were observed crossing the study site during the excavation of the flume trench to the west of the factory buildings and it seems possible that the defensive ditches take a different form than has been previously assumed, with a far less rectangular outline.
- 6.3.6 Two differing orientations of ditch were observed during the excavation of the flume trench. The central ditch was recorded as being aligned on a more north—south orientation than the exterior two and it is possible that this ditch connects with a NW—SE orientated ditch, observed to the south of the factory during a 'watching brief' undertaken during its construction. The resultant ditch would, in plan, be far more circular than rectangular, and would follow the alignment of a similar U-shaped ditch observed during the excavation of the main area of Site 240 (Figure 6). This curvilinear plan of the southernmost ditch has been further confirmed by a review of geophysical and cropmark evidence.²⁰ To date there has been no opportunity to consider a chronological sequence for these ditches, but it is entirely possible that they incorporate several phases of development, possibly taking differing forms.²¹
- 6.3.7 Several other noteworthy aspects of the site were observed during the 'watching brief' and the excavation of the flume trench (Figure 6). Whilst the remains of Dere Street are known to have been truncated beneath the factory buildings and adjacent areas of hardstanding, the cemented cobble road surface is thought to survive adjacent to the southern and northern boundaries of the site. In addition, it is probable that the boundary ditches for the bridgehead defences were not fully truncated during construction of the factory and thus the lower portions of these features should survive beneath the hardstanding and floor slab.
- 6.3.8 A substantial Roman building was recorded extending up to the edge of Dere Street in the south—west corner of the site, with a portico extending up to the roadside. Further evidence of structural remains was observed at the southern boundary of the site, also suggesting that the remains of high-class and extensive Roman buildings survive within the study area. These southernmost buildings were constructed from red sandstone the only other such construction in the vicinity being the Agricolan fort.²² An area seemingly used for mixing mortar and other industrial activities was observed immediately to the north of these building remains, although this probably did not survive the construction groundworks. A cobble-built Roman well was recorded in the north—west corner of the area and is preserved beneath concrete capping. Between these features, extensive occupation evidence was observed. The area to the west of the flume trench, known to contain Roman structural remains, is undisturbed ground, whilst beneath the eastern area of the factory buildings Roman occupation remains are thought to survive *in situ*.

22 Thubron, pers. comm.

²⁰ Wilson, 1998.

²¹ This and the following observations are Thubron, *pers. comm.*



Figure 6
Archaeological features observed during construction of the CAMAS factory
(information supplied by Shirley Thubron)
Scale 1:2,000