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# CHESTERS ROMAN FORT, VISITOR CENTRE PROPOSALS

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

JULY 2003

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<i>English Heritage</i>	By: <i>The Archaeological Practice Ltd.</i>
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*Prepared by*

The Archaeological Practice Ltd



*Frontispiece: The ticket office and open area from the south-west*

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## SUMMARY

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*This report comprises an archaeological assessment which has been compiled to accompany a planning application by English Heritage to improve the visitor facilities at Chesters Roman fort. The assessment identifies cultural heritage constraints within and adjacent to the area of the proposed new visitor centre and makes recommendations regarding the work required to mitigate the scheme's impact.*

*The report collates evidence from a wide range of sources, including historic maps, aerial photographs, secondary historical works and the Northumberland County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). In particular it draws extensively on the previous archaeological assessment work covering the area, culminating in the Chesters Conservation Plan (2002).*

*This has resulted in the identification of a total of 33 sites and monuments within the defined assessment area. Of these 26 were previously recorded on the Northumberland County SMR, 17 of which are scheduled ancient monuments. Six listed buildings records also relate to the area. Together these provide contextual information regarding the archaeological and historical development of the area of Chesters.*

*The assessment concludes that:*

- 1. Previous limited investigation in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development, conducted by means of monitoring during the excavation of service trenches, has revealed no evidence of archaeological features or deposits. However, in view of the limited depth and extent of these interventions, this does not constitute decisive evidence that no remains are present.*
- 2. The historic map evidence provides no evidence for the existence of any structure on the site prior to the construction of the current buildings, beginning with the Museum and Lodge at the end of the 19th century. The nearest earlier building is the lodge situated to the west of the Museum, at the end of the drive leading to Chesters Mansion, probably constructed at some stage between 1771 and 1854.*
- 3. Surviving ridge and furrow earthworks in the fields to the south of the development site and historic map evidence indicate that the area was subject to arable cultivation during the medieval period and up to the later 18th century, although that cultivation may not have been continuous. Such cultivation will potentially have damaged any archaeological deposits and features within the footprint of the development, but the extent of preservation elsewhere at Chesters, within the fort and the vicus, where ploughing was also undertaken in the medieval/early modern eras, suggests significant structures and deposits could still remain.*
- 4. The distance of the proposed development from the fort (c. 150m) renders it less likely that defensive outworks - pits or entanglements (lilia and cippi) - for the fort or the Wall curtain would be situated within the development footprint. Buildings associated with the vicus are also generally considered unlikely to the north of Hadrian's Wall.*
- 5. A late 18th century antiquarian description and recent geophysical survey results provide tentative evidence for the presence of structures or features in the field to the north of the fort. Such features might conceivably extend beyond the surveyed area into the development site. However the existence of these features has not been definitively confirmed, and their extent and identification are accordingly extremely uncertain.*

*It is considered that the proposed development will have the following impacts:*

1. *Construction of the proposed new visitor centre will severely impact on any archaeological features or deposits within its footprint, although the survival of any such deposits cannot be substantiated in our present state of knowledge.*
2. *Relocation of the pathway leading from the museum to the north gate will have some impact on the archaeological features intersected by its course. These include evident ridge and furrow and a trackway along the north side of the fort used in the mid 18th century, but possibly of much earlier origin, identified by historic map evidence and geophysical survey. Other features, which have been identified by geophysical survey alone, include a possible cemetery and a ditched enclosure at the north end of the field.*
3. *The shallow soil cover over the remains of the fort and its environs makes them vulnerable to damage by any non-archaeological intervention. The new footpath system, which it is proposed to establish within and around the fort, may therefore potentially have an adverse impact on surviving archaeological remains.*
4. *Conversely removal of the existing path from the museum to the fort will provide an opportunity to archaeologically examine a strip across the intervening field prior to the reinstatement of turf.*
5. *The proposed development will have a minimal visual impact on the fort and other Roman frontier monuments, but a greater visual impact on the museum.*

*The assessment makes a number of recommendations for archaeological work to evaluate and to mitigate the cultural heritage impact of the proposed scheme (Section 7). These comprise:*

- 1) *Evaluation in the form of trial trenching is required to determine whether significant archaeological deposits survive within the area of the proposed new visitor centre.*
- 2) *The new footpath intended to connect the fort with the museum and visitor facilities should as far as possible be designed to minimise the impact upon any cultural features and deposits intersected by its course.*
- 3) *The proposed new footpath system within and around the fort should be designed to effect minimal intrusion upon the archaeological deposits, preferably by persisting with the current method of frequent and close cropping of particular strips within the grass sward to define paths.*
- 4) *Following the removal of the existing path between the museum and the fort, the opportunity should be taken to archaeologically examine the strip revealed across the intervening field.*

*It is possible that the trial trench evaluation may identify a need for further evaluation or mitigation work.*

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## **1.1. Purpose of Assessment**

This report, prepared by The Archaeological Practice Ltd, has been commissioned by English Heritage. It is intended to accompany a planning application by English Heritage to improve visitor facilities at Chesters Roman Fort.

The principal aims of the assessment are to identify archaeological constraints within the area of land likely to be impacted directly by any of the proposed developments, to identify areas or locations where further investigative evaluation is necessary in order to clarify remaining areas of uncertainty regarding the nature and significance of the archaeological resource, and to make recommendations regarding the work required to mitigate the scheme's impact.

## **1.2. Methodology of Assessment**

The assessment will:

- define the area concerned (section 2) and list the principal sources of information available for archaeological assessment (section 3).
- present a catalogue (section 4) and chronological synthesis (section 5) of archaeological data derived from various sources. Accompanying base maps will locate established structures and features within, or in close proximity to, the proposed developments.
- provide conclusions with respect to the known and potential archaeological significance of the proposed development sites (section 6).
- outline the further work proposed to define more clearly the nature of the archaeological record and recommend measures to mitigate the impact of the scheme on the cultural heritage resource (section 7).

## 2. ASSESSMENT CONTEXT

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### 2.1 Location and Extent of the Survey Area

The assessment focusses on an area incorporating the present museum building and ticket office/shop, to the north of Chesters Roman fort. As is customary with this kind of work, the scope of the report extends well beyond the immediate footprint of the scheme to embrace a wider zone, which stretches up to 1km from the proposed improvements. This zone is bounded by Walwick to the north west, Chollerford to the north east and Walwick Grange to the south. Consideration of this broader zone provides contextual information regarding those individual sites or historic landscape components which might potentially be physically impacted by the proposed scheme. It also ensures that any site or landscape component which might be more indirectly (e.g. visually) affected is incorporated in the site catalogue (section 4).

### 2.2 Topography

The site is located beside the B6318 ('The Military Road') on the edge of the valley floor above the River North Tyne. To the north the terrain begins to slope steeply upward. To the east and south east the land slopes gently down to the river.

### 2.3 Site description and present land-use

The site contains the visitor reception facilities for Chesters Roman fort, a monument in the guardianship of English Heritage. A single storey range houses a ticket office, shop and toilets with a car park to the east. To the west, separated from the ticket office/shop by an open grassy area fringed by trees, stands the museum, built at the end of the 19th century to house the Clayton collection - mostly finds recovered during excavations sponsored by John Clayton at Chesters and other sites on his Roman Wall estate. The lodge building on the west side of the museum, designed in conjunction with the museum, initially to house the museum caretaker or curator, has maintained a residential function, currently housing one of the employees of Chesters Estate. The fields between the museum and the fort are used as pasture, both through grazing and hay cultivation, by the Chesters Estate.

### 2.4 Nature of Proposed Developments

The scheme involves the construction of a new, visitor centre to replace the existing ticket office, shop and toilet range. The bulk of the new building, incorporating a shop, cafeteria, education room and toilets will stand on the site of the existing range, whilst an additional wing containing site interpretation and a workshop will extend westward along the north side of the current open grassy area, towards the Clayton Museum. There will, however, be no direct link through into the museum.

In addition, it is proposed to relocate of the pathway leading from the museum to the north gate to approach the gate on the same axis as the passageway and to establish a new footpath system at the site, which will run around the perimeter of the fort, follow the course of the principal streets within it, and connect to the bridge and bathhouse.

### 2.5 Potential Impacts - General

The construction of a building has the potential to cause physical damage to cultural heritage remains through excavation of foundations or floor platforms and general ground disturbance associated with construction operations and also through ancillary operations such as the diversion of services, site compounds, and associated landscaping work. Even the construction of footpaths has the potential to damage archaeological deposits if they lie at a shallow depth. In addition important sites could be adversely affected by development which materially affects their setting.



## **2.6 Established and Potential Significance of the Assessment Area**

### ***World Heritage Site***

The site of the proposed development falls within the agreed setting of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, which was designated by UNESCO in 1987. Chesters Museum, itself, forms an integral part of the World Heritage Site.

### ***Guardianship***

The fort, bathhouse, bridge remains and associated stretches of Hadrian's Wall are all in the guardianship of English Heritage. The development site lies outside the guardianship area. English Heritage also leases and administers the museum under the guidance of an independent body of trustees.

### ***Scheduled Ancient Monuments***

The Scheduling of a site by the Secretary of State denotes it is of at least national significance and provides statutory protection over the defined area of the monument. There are six scheduled ancient monuments within the wider assessment area (equating to 17 sites listed on the Northumberland Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)). The proposed development site lies outside the scheduled area of Chesters Roman fort (SAM 26051), the northern boundary of the scheduled area being located c. 130m to the south of the proposed development.

### ***Listed Buildings***

Listing of built structures by the Secretary of State denotes historical or architectural interest, but does not necessarily include all buildings of significance or local importance. There are six listed structures within the defined assessment area. Chesters Museum is listed grade II\*.

### ***Sites appearing on the Northumberland County Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)***

The Northumberland County Council SMR has been accessed for entries within and in close proximity to the overall assessment area which may be impacted upon by proposed developments. Consideration of sites outside the defined zone enables better evaluation of its archaeological and historical context, highlighting the nature of potential remains within the assessment area. There are 26 entries relating to sites within the defined assessment area.

## **2.7 The Chesters Roman Fort Conservation Plan (CCP) and previous assessment work**

The preparation of the proposals to improve the visitor reception and site interpretation facilities was informed by the Chesters Roman Fort Conservation Plan recently completed by the University of York on behalf of English Heritage (The University of York 2002, cited here as *CCP*). This provides the most comprehensive synthesis available covering the archaeological resource in the fort and its environs. The conservation plan in turn built on previous archaeological assessment work, collating earlier investigations and research, notably the survey of the extent and preservation of archaeological deposits compiled by Tyne and Wear Museums in 1993 (Bidwell & Snape 1993).

## 3. SOURCES FOR ASSESSMENT

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### 3.1 Archival Material and Secondary Sources

The following sources of documentary, cartographic and photographic evidence were consulted:

- *Northumberland County Record Office, Melton Park, Gosforth (NRO)*
- *Northumberland SMR, Planning Department (Conservation Team), Northumberland County Council, Morpeth (SMR)*
- *Northumberland County Library, Morpeth (NorCL)*
- *City Library, Local Studies section, Newcastle upon Tyne (NCL)*
- *Museum of Antiquities Record Room, University of Newcastle upon Tyne (MA)*
- *National Monument Record, Swindon (NMR)*
- *Air Photograph Library, Unit for Landscape Modelling (formerly the Cambridge University Centre for Aerial Photography) (CAPL)*

### 3.2 Types of Information

Included amongst the various kinds of information used from each of the above sources are the following:

#### 3.2.1 SMR, Scheduled Monument and Listed Building Records

A total of 26 sites and monuments recorded on the Northumberland County SMR, fall within the defined assessment area and provide contextual information on the archaeological and historical development of the assessment area. Seventeen of these constitute scheduled ancient monuments. Six listed buildings records are relevant to the area.

#### 3.2.2 Primary documentary sources

The majority of sources were consulted through published synthesis, but a number of original documents were also examined, in particular title awards and historic maps.

#### 3.2.3 Secondary and Published Information

Published works which shed general contextual light upon the assessment area or upon particular aspects of its archaeology or history are included in the bibliography (section 9), and cited where relevant in the synthesis (section 6).

#### *Local and Regional Histories*

The principal local history covering the area of Chesters is part II, volume 3 of John Hodgson's monumental *History of Northumberland* (1840). Hodgson was the first to study many of the primary documentary sources relating to medieval and early modern Northumberland and his compilations of this material (in the three volumes of part III) are still useful.

### ***Antiquarian sources***

The descriptions provided by antiquaries who visited Chesters from the late 17th century onwards, beginning with Thomas Machell in 1691, provide much information regarding the state of the Roman monuments at that time and also details regarding contemporary landuse, including the continuing agricultural cultivation over the site. The accounts of Horsley (1732, 143-4) and Hutchinson (1778, 1, 73) are of particular significance for our understanding of the site. This information has been collated by Bidwell and Snape (1993, 5-8) and the Chesters Conservation Plan (CCP: 8-9) building on earlier work by Birley (1961, 172-5).

### ***Hadrian's Wall Research***

There is a vast body of secondary literature covering research and investigation on Hadrian's Wall and at Chesters in particular, stretching from Horsley's *Britannia Romana* (1732) through the work of Hodgson and Collingwood Bruce right up to the present day. New information is periodically collated in the *Handbook to The Roman Wall* (Daniels 1978 is still the most recent edition) and the handbooks compiled to accompany the decennial 'pilgrimages' along Hadrian's Wall by the members of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne and the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society (Daniels 1989; Bidwell 1999). The English Heritage guidebook to Chesters Roman fort also provides a useful summary (Johnson 1990).

### ***Previous assessments and reports***

Two documents completed in the last ten years are especially invaluable for any archaeological assessment at Chesters:

1. *The Roman Fort of Chesters and its Environs: A survey of the extent and preservation of the archaeological deposits* (Bidwell & Snape 1993)
2. *Chesters Roman Fort Conservation Plan* (The University of York, 2002)

Together these summarise a great deal of earlier investigation and research, drawing on a wide variety of source material, to provide the most comprehensive analyses yet of the archaeological resource at Chesters.

### **3.2.4 Historic Map Evidence**

Although the area of Hadrian's Wall is covered by county maps from the late 16th century onwards, notably those compiled by Saxton (1576), Speed (1611) and Warburton (1716), detailed mapping begins in the 18th century with Horsley's map of the Wall published in *Britannia Romana* (1732) and the Military Road Survey of 1749. The following have been found useful in compiling a catalogue of monuments and history of the assessment area:

- NCL - *Map of the County of Northumberland*, Warburton, 1716.
- *Map of the Roman Wall from Hunnum to Cilurnum*, John Horsley, *Britannia Romana* 1732 (Figure 3)
- NRO ZAN MSM 5 - *A Survey of the Country between Newcastle and Carlisle ...*, Dugal Campbell & Hugh Debbeig, 1749 (Figure 17) (see also ZAL 99/3 - Allgood version)
- NRO - *Map of the County of Northumberland*, Armstrong, 1769 (Figure 4)
- NRO - *Map of the County of Northumberland*, Fryer, 1820 (Figure 5)
- NRO - *Map of the County of Northumberland*, Greenwood, 1828 (Figure 6)
- NRO DT 476L - *A Map of Warden Parish*, Coulson 1838 (Tithe Award, 31 Dec. 1844) (Figure 7).
- NRO DT 425/3 - *A Map of Humshaugh, Walwick etc. townships (Simonburn Parish)*, Coulson Dec.1839 (Tithe Award, 16 Aug 1841.) (Figure 8).
- *The Roman Wall and Illustrations of the Principal Vestiges of Roman Occupation in the North of England*, MacLauchlan 1857 (Figure 9).
- NRO - *First Edition Ordnance Survey*, c.1860, Northumberland, 1:2500 Sheet 85.5 (Figure 16)

- NRO - *First Edition Ordnance Survey*, 1865, Northumberland, 6" Sheet 85 (Figure 10)
- NRO - *Second Edition Ordnance Survey*, 1896, Northumberland, 1:2500 Sheet 85.5 (Figure 11)
- NRO - *Third Edition Ordnance Survey*, 1922, Northumberland, 1:2500 Sheet 82.14 (Figure 12)
- NRO - *Fourth Edition Ordnance Survey*, Northumberland, 1:2500 Sheet 82.14

### 3.2.5 Aerial Photographs

Aerial photographs offer only minimal assistance in identifying features within the area of the proposed development. Construction of the museum and associated lodge at the end of the 19th century, plus adjacent tree cover, largely obscure the area from view on even the earliest aerial photographs. More recent creation of the ticket office/shop, car park and cafe have masked the area further. The aerial views do, however, reveal features in the surrounding fields, specifically ridge and furrow earthworks, which provide contextual information concerning the historical development of the assessment area.

The complete aerial photographic coverage of Chesters has been the subject of a comprehensive transcription survey by the RCHME, in 1992-3, involving the plotting of visible cropmarks and earthworks. This work needs no duplication here, and accordingly only locally accessible repositories were consulted in the preparation of this assessment.

Photographs which cover all or part of the area north of the fort include the following:

#### **MA:**

Four photograph albums (HGI 33-36 - Aitkinson Collection) contain a fine series of overlapping vertical aerial views taken along Hadrian's Wall by the RAF in 1930. Three photographs in volume II cover Chesters and its environs (HGI 34/28-30).

The Record Room also holds the following views in the main air photographic collection, not all of which cover the area of the museum and ticket office though most show at least part of the area north of the fort:

NY/9070/A-B (Views of Chesters House, 1970)

NY/9170/A-D (1947-8)

NY/9170/E-I (taken in the dry summer of 1949)

NY/9170/J-N (1957)

NY/9170/O-Q (1964)

NY/9170/R-V (1970)

#### **NCL:**

Neg. A/129382/2; Acc. no. 57375 (View of fort Chesters House and surrounding area taken by N McCord in 1979)

### 3.2.6 Site Inspection and Local Information

A site visit was made to examine in detail the monuments and features in the immediate vicinity of the proposed improvements by Dr Alan Rushworth on 23rd June 2003. The field to the west of the museum-fort path was covered by mown hay. The principal observations derived from this inspection have been included in the relevant sections below (4, 5 and 6).

### 3.2.7 Excavation and Survey

### ***Excavation***

Under John Clayton extensive excavations were undertaken in the fort from 1840 onwards. Work in the 20th century was generally on a smaller scale, with the relatively recent exception of the work on the bridge in the 1982-3 (Bidwell & Holbrook 1989). Work outside the fort has largely been restricted to the bridge, the bathhouse and the Wall curtain and is all of limited relevance to this assessment. Only two archaeological interventions are recorded within or adjacent to the area of the proposed development - watching briefs conducted in February 1977 and January 1978 during the excavation of service trenches to the ticket office/shop and to the cafe ('Lucullus Larder'), respectively. These yielded no evidence of archaeological features or deposits. The significance of these findings is discussed in section 5.2.

### ***Earthwork and Aerial Photographic Surveys***

More useful are the series of surveys, still unpublished in detail, completed by English Heritage and the RCHME in the 1990s. Aerial photographs of the vicus were plotted by the RCHME in 1992-3, expanding earlier work by Salway (compare Salway 1965, 78-80, fig.8 and Bidwell 1999, 116, fig. 32), and the ridge and furrow earthworks on all sides of the fort were surveyed in 1993, again by the RCHME (cf. fig.18).

### ***Geophysical Investigation***

A geophysical survey of the fort was undertaken by English Heritage in 1992. More significantly for the purposes of this assessment, a further survey, comprising both magnetometry and resistivity, was carried out over the field north and north east of the fort by Timescape Survey in July 2001, with the aim of revealing hitherto unsuspected archaeological remains. The final report on this work has yet not appeared, but the contractor's preliminary conclusions were available for consultation and have been incorporated in the discussive synthesis where relevant.

The preliminary nature of these conclusions must be emphasised, however, and they should be treated with a degree of caution until definitive processing and reporting has been completed.

## 4. SITE CATALOGUE

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The catalogue below provides a listing both of the sites likely to be materially affected by the development and of monuments in the wider vicinity which may be visually impacted or which may provide contextual information regarding the historical development of the area. The catalogue is derived from consultation of the sources noted in section 3. Cross referencing is provided to the site numbering in the Conservation Plan, along with the relevant SMR, NMR and Scheduled Ancient Monument identifiers.

### 4.1 Monuments and features within or immediately adjacent to the proposed development

*[1] Chesters Museum; SMR 9341; Listed Grade II\*; NGR: NY 9116 7043; CCP: Zone 12*

Museum housing the Clayton Collection. Commissioned by Nathaniel George Clayton prior to 1895 and designed by the Newcastle architect Frank W Rich. Completed in 1896 and opened in 1903. The museum is part of the World Heritage Site. The building is leased by English Heritage from the Chesters Estate.

*[2] Entrance Lodge; Listed Grade II; NGR: NY 9116 7043; CCP: Zone 12*

Designed by Frank W Rich as part of an integrated complex with the museum. Intended to house the person in charge of the museum and used for this purpose up to 1930.

*[3] Watching brief - 'Lucullus Larder'; SMR: 9320; NGR: NY 911 704; CCP: Zone 9*

Watching brief conducted in January 1978 during the excavation of service trenches to the cafe ('Lucullus Larder'). These provided no evidence of archaeological features or deposits.

*[4] Watching brief - Ticket office/shop; SMR: 9321; NGR: NY 912 704; CCP: Zone 13*

Watching brief conducted in February 1977 during the excavation of service trenches to the ticket office/shop. These provided no evidence of archaeological features or deposits. The trenches were 0.6m deep within disturbed/made up ground. This redeposited material is likely to have resulted from the construction of the Museum and Lodge at the end of the 19th century.

### 4.2 Monuments and features within the defined assessment area

The following includes monuments and features lying outside the area of likely direct impact, but within the wider assessment area. Listing of these sites provides contextual information important for an understanding of the area's historical development. In certain cases these sites might potentially be visually impacted.

*[5] Chesters Estate original entrance lodge; NGR: NY 9108 7045*

Small single-storey lodge, situated c. 55m to the west of the museum, beside the Military Road. Features on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey (c. 1860) and MacLauchlan's survey of the Roman Wall, a few years previously, but not on any earlier map. It was located at the entrance to the drive leading up to Chesters mansion, and was probably built following the construction of the mansion in 1771.

*[6] Ridge and furrow ; NGR: NY 912 703; CCP: Zone 9*

A complex pattern of ridge and furrow earthworks in the two fields to the north of the fort and Hadrian's Wall. It comprises a mixture of broad curving rigg, to the east, north east and more distant north, and straighter narrow ridging to the west and particularly to the immediate north of the fort.

*[7] ESE-WNW oriented trackway ; NGR: NY 9115 7030--9140 7020; CCP: Zone 9*

ESE-WNW oriented trackway passing immediately to the north of the fort. Evident on the 2001 geophysical survey and depicted by the 1749 Military Road survey (NRO: ZAN MSM 5). This lane connected Walwick with Humshaugh via Humshaugh Mill at Waterside, a short distance upstream from the Roman bridge. It may originally have led directly to the medieval bridge [31], which lay roughly midway between the Roman Bridge and 18th century Chollerford Bridge.

**[8]** *Chesters Roman fort; SMR: 9276; SAM 26051; NGR: NY 911 700; CCP: Zones 1-6*

Well-preserved remains of the cavalry fort of Cilurnum. Occupied from the reign of Hadrian to the beginning of the 5th century. The remains of the four main gates, several other stretches of the defences, particularly on the south side, the headquarters building (*principia*), commanding officer's house (*praetorium*) and parts of three barrack ranges are exposed to view

**[9]** *Turret 27a; SMR: 9272; SAM 26051; NGR: nY 9119 7016; CCP: Zone 5*

Foundations of Turret 27a preserved beneath the remains of the fort, 42m west of the inner face of the east gateway.

**[10]** *Bathhouse; SMR: 9338; SAM 26051; NGR: NY 9129 7008; CCP: Zone 7*

Well-preserved Hadrianic bathhouse serving the fort garrison. The west wall of the building stands c. 3m high.

**[11]** *Roman bridge abutments and piers; SMR: 9275; SAM 26051; NGR: NY 9135 7009--9141 7007; CCP: Zone 8*

Abutments and piers for a bridge carrying the Wall and the Military Way over the North Tyne. The eastern abutment is well-preserved. The western abutment is normally submerged, but visible during low water. A section of consolidated Wall and a tower base adjoin the east bridge abutment. Excavations in 1982 and 1990-91 showed that the bridge had two main phases: a Hadrianic primary phase and a substantial mid Antonine rebuild. Coin evidence suggested the bridge continued in use down to the end of the Roman period.

**[12]** *Roman altar, findspot; SMR: 8596; NGR: NY 9127 6994; CCP: Zone 11*

Chance discovery of Roman altar on the west bank of the North Tyne in September 1978. Probably not *in situ*. Dedicated to the Discipline of the Emperor Hadrian by the *ala Augusta ob virtutem appellata*, probably the original Hadrianic garrison at Chesters.

**[13]** *Remains of vicus (civil settlement); SMR: 9337; SAM 26051; NGR: NY 910 701; CCP: Zones 10-11*

Remains of an extensive vicus stretching around the southern sides of the fort and visible as parchmarks on aerial photographs. Numerous strip buildings are evident laid out along several streets with a drainage system connected to the main drain leading away from the fort (Salway 1965, 78-80; Bidwell & Snape 1993, 23-5). A large building complex to the SSE may represent a *mansio*.

**[14]** *Temple sites, unlocated; SMR: 9340; SAM 26051; NGR: NY 911 700; CCP: Zones 10-11*

Two temples and a Dolichenum are attested at Chesters by finds of sculptured and inscribed stonework. These ritual monuments have not yet been located.

**[15]** *Roman road; SMR: 8625; SAM 26051; NGR: NY 9082 6970; CCP: Zone 11*

Road running from the south gate of the fort towards the Stanegate. Visible on aerial photography running along the crest of the river bank south of the ha-ha wall.

**[16]** *Roman cemeteries; SMR: 8624; SAM 26050 & 26051; NGR: NY 915700 & NY 911 699; CCP: Zones 10-11*

A possible cemetery south west of the fort, has been identified on the basis of antiquarian accounts (Horsley 1732, 143, 216) in a field named the Ox-Close which is thought to lie beside the bend in the river at Hodley Bank, just south of the vicus (Bruce 1867, 155n; Salway 1965, 79-80; Bidwell & Snape 1993, 5, 8, 26; *CCP*: 1, 144-5).

A second probable cemetery was located alongside the Military Way as it approaches the river crossing of the North Tyne on the east side. Excavation works for the building of the Border Counties Railway line, in 1857, uncovered human bone, a burial urn and fragments of samian ware.

**[17]** *Roman well*; *SMR*: 9339; *SAM* 26051; *NGR*: NY 9095 7015; *CCP*: Zone 10

A well, believed to be Roman, encircled by masonry and sealed by a modern iron covering, survives as an upstanding feature immediately outside the garden at Chesters House.

**[18]** *Hadrian's Wall and vallum in wall miles 25, 26 and 27, east of the North Tyne*; *SMR*: 8627; *SAM* 26050; *NGR*: NY 9362 6945--9136 6999; *CCP*: Zone 10

A c. 100m length of the curtain and ditch of Hadrian's Wall survives from disused Border Counties Railway line to the east bridge abutment, and is in guardianship. The Vallum and the Military Way do not survive as visible features between the A6079 road and the river.

**[19]** *Milecastle 27 (Low Brunton)*; *SMR*: 8548; *SAM* 26050; *NGR*: NY 9167 6998

Long axis milecastle excavated in 1952. Visible as a low, almost square, platform, with a maximum height of 0.4m.

**[20]** *Possible Roman temporary camp*; *SMR*: 8587; *NGR*: NY 916 697

A possible temporary camp identified on aerial photographs taken by J K St Joseph (ACB 63-66).

**[21]** *Chesters House*; *SMR*: 9314; *Listed Grade II\**; *NGR*: NY 9090 7025

Chesters mansion house - residence of John Clayton. First built in 1771 under John Errington. Enlarged by Norman Shaw in 1891.

**[22]** *The Stables at Chesters*; *SMR*: 9314; *Listed Grade II\**; *NGR*: NY 9085 7048

Large stable complex forming part of the Chesters Estate, situated on the north side of the B6318, well away from Chesters House. Built by Norman Shaw.

**[23]** *Hadrian's Wall & Vallum between Chesters and the road to Simonburn in Wall miles 27, 28 and 29*; *SMR*: 7928; *SAM* 26052; *NGR*: NY 9085 7030--8829 7125; *CCP*: Zone 10

Hadrian's Wall survives as a buried feature below grassland in this section. A short stretch of Wall curtain, 13.5m long and up to 1.1m high, is exposed in the grounds of Chesters House. At Walwick, houses and gardens have been built over the line of the Wall. The Vallum is largely ploughed out between Chesters and Towertie plantation. The Military Way does not survive as a visible feature.

**[24]** *Turret 27b*; *SMR*: 9273; *SAM* 26052; *NGR*: 9076 7035

The precise location of Turret 27b has not been established. Its predicted location, on the basis of the usual spacing, is in the grounds of Chesters House. It may survive as a buried feature.

**[25]** *Milecastle 28*; *SMR*: 9274; *SAM* 26052; *NGR*: NY 9035 7050

The exact location of milecastle 28 is not yet confirmed. The scarp at NY 9035 7050 previously cited as being part of the milecastle platform is now considered to lie too far south of the line of the Wall. The predicted location, on the basis of the usual spacing, would be where the B6318 changes direction at the east end of Walwick.



**[26]** *Little Walwick Cottage (site of Hadrian's Wall); SMR: 9322; NGR: NY 9027 7056*

A watching brief was carried out during conversion work on Little Walwick Cottage, just south of the line of Hadrian's Wall. No archaeological material was observed.

**[27]** *Walwick, shrunken medieval village; SMR: 9318; NGR: NY 902 706*

Shrunken medieval village. Centre of the manor and vill (township) of Walwick. Mentioned in the Itinerary of Wark 1279. The Military Road Survey showed seven buildings in 1749 (cf. Wrathmell 1975, 524).

**[28]** *Walwick Grange; SMR: 8586; Listed Grade II\*; NGR: NY 90725 69305*

Early 18th-century house, altered in the early 19th century, reputedly incorporating a medieval tower.

**[29]** *Fish ponds 250m NW of Walwick Grange Farm; SMR: 8576; SAM 25043; NGR: NY 9043 6930*

A group of four extremely well-preserved, medieval fishponds, 250m north west of Walwick Grange Farm. The stream to the south is thought to have been modified to provide a water supply.

**[30]** *Chollerford Bridge; SMR: 9296; SAM 111; Listed Grade II; NGR: NY 9196 7051*

Bridge built following the Great Flood of 1771, and opened in 1775. The remains of the preceding bridge, destroyed in the Great Flood and probably built in the early 18th century (see site 31 below) are located just to the south west of the current bridge and consist of end abutments and the foundations of two piers.

**[31]** *Remains of medieval bridge, Chollerford; SMR: 9295; SAM 111b; NGR: NY 9177 7034*

West abutment of the medieval Chollerford Bridge is buried in bushes and shingle. The bridge is recorded as being repaired in 1394 (Hodgson 1897, 169). In 1718, the bridge at Chollerford was recorded as broken down and out of repair; it may have been repaired, but in 1733 it was said to be broken down by flood. If these references relate to the surviving medieval bridge it may have been now that it was replaced by the first bridge on the present site (see site 30). For the possible road leading to the bridge see site 7, just north of Chesters Fort.

**[32]** *Ridge and furrow in the fields S of Chesters fort; SAM 26051; NGR: NY 910 701; CCP: Zones 10-11*

Ridge and furrow in the fields to the south of the fort, overlying the remains of the vicus. Identifiable as earthworks and clearly evident on aerial photography. Surveyed and plotted by the RCHME in 1992-3. A mixture of broad and narrow rigg is visible.

**[33]** *Hollow-way NW of Chesters fort; ; NGR: NY 911 703; CCP: Zone 9*

Lane depicted on the Military Road Survey (1749) and Armstrong's map (1769) approaching the fort from the direction of Walwick Grange, passing just to the west to a junction with lane [7] and continuing to the NNW to link up with the Military Road. Out of use by the 19th century. Can still be traced as a hollow-way north west of the fort.

## 5. SYNTHESIS

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This section consists of two parts: a concise general synthesis, summarising the known historical development of Chesters; followed by a detailed discussion of the specific evidence and cultural heritage remains relating to the site of the proposed development. The latter is presented in the form of a retrogressive analysis.

### 5.1 General synthesis

#### 5.1.1 Prehistoric

There is no specific evidence for prehistoric activity at Chesters. It is likely, however, that the area was exploited by Palaeolithic and Mesolithic hunter-gatherers and, later, by farming populations from the Neolithic period onwards, using the North Tyne valley as a communications artery as well as an obvious water source. Three cup marks, of possible Neolithic or Bronze Age date, surviving on the upper surface of one of the blocks of the east abutment of the Roman bridge, are indicative of some landscape exploitation or settlement in the wider area from which stone was quarried.

#### 5.1.2 Romano-British

The complex of installations associated with the Hadrian's Wall, including the Wall curtain with its ditch, milecastles and turrets, the vallum and the the first bridge over the North Tyne and the fort were built from 122 onwards. These operations doubtless continued over many years and involved many alterations as plans were amended, including the demolition of turret 27a [Cat. site 9] built on the site which was to be occupied by the fort. The placename of the site was Cilurnum - 'cauldron-pool' - thought to refer to a natural feature in the North Tyne (Rivet & Smith 1981, 307-8; but see now Bidwell 1999, 117).

The 5.75 acre (2.3 hect.) fort [8] was built to house a cavalry regiment (*ala*), probably the *ala Augusta ob virtutem appellata* which is recorded on an altar found in the river in 1978 (Austen & Breeze 1979). It was occupied up to the end of the 4th century, when it was recorded in the late Roman register of civil and military office holders known as the Notitia Dignitatum (*ND Occ.* XL 38: *praefectus alae secundae [A]st[ur]um, Cilurno*). The *ala II Asturum*, a regiment originally deriving from north-west Spain, comprised the fort's garrison from the c.180 to the end of the 4th century. During three centuries of continuous occupation the fort inevitably underwent many internal alterations, which do not fall within the scope of this assessment. The suggestion (Bruce 1880, 1; Birley 1961, 173) that there was an earlier fort at or near Chesters, from the Flavian era onwards, has never been substantiated.

To the east of the fort, above the river bank, the bathhouse [10] built during the reign of Hadrian to serve the fort has been fully excavated and is considered one of the very best -preserved in Britain.

The remains of an extensive civil settlement (*vicus*) have been traced around the southern sides of the through aerial photography ([13]; Salway 1965, 78-80; Bidwell & Snape 1993, 23-5; *CCP*: 1, 137, 142-4). The photographs show strip-buildings laid out along several streets, including a large complex to the SSE which represent a *mansio*. No investigation has taken place within the *vicus*, in contrast to the extensive work in the fort, so little is known of the settlement's development and chronology.

However work on other civil settlements on the northern frontier has shown they virtually all appear to have been largely abandoned by the end of the 3rd century.

A possible cemetery [16], south west of the fort, has been identified on the basis of antiquarian accounts (Horsley 1732, 143, 216) in a field named the Ox-Close which is thought to lie beside the bend in the river at Hodley Bank, just south of the vicus (Bruce 1867, 155n; Salway 1965, 79-80; Bidwell & Snape 1993, 5, 8, 26; *CCP*: 1, 144-5).

### 5.1.3 Early Medieval

Little is known of the fate of Chesters in the centuries following the collapse of Roman imperial authority. Camden (1695, 852-3) identified *Cilurnum* with the place variously named Cithlescester, Scydescester, Syltecester or Scythlescester, where King Elfwald of Northumbria was killed by a nobleman, Sigga, in 788 ('Black Book ...' *Surtees Society* 46 (1864) 30-3; cf. Bidwell & Snape 1993, 3, 5), but this equation was disputed by Horsley (1732, 143). An Anglian style brooch of 7th-century date was found within the site during the 19th century, but its exact provenance is not recorded. The discovery of 33 skeletons on the site of the bathhouse (Bruce 1885, 101; Bidwell & Snape 1993, 3; *CCP*: 1, 6) may indicate its reuse as a burial ground in the post-Roman period, although could conceivably also be of late Roman date.

### 5.1.4 Medieval

During the medieval era Chesters fell within an ancient estate, the territory of which roughly corresponded to the township (medieval *vill*) of Walwick, as documented in the 19th-century tithe maps (Bidwell & Snape 1993, 3-4; *CCP*: 1, 7). This area included the small village or hamlet of Walwick itself ([27]; cf. Wrathmell 1975, 524), built over the site of Milecastle 28, and Walwick Grange [28] at the southern end beside the river. The north-east part around Chesters was apparently known as Walwick Meadows or Walwick Field, and, by the 18th century, East Chesters or Walwick Chesters (Horsley 1732, 143; Hodgson 1840, 418y). David I of Scotland granted the property of Wallewic to one of his barons, Richard Comyn (Hodgson 1840, 416-7). It was probably the same Richard who granted the monks of Hexham Abbey the common pasture for 200 sheep, 116 oxen and ten cows in the 'pastures of Walwyke' (*ibid*, 404-5). In 1330 the original estate was divided, with Walwick Grange to the south forming one property whilst Walwick and Walwick Meadows made up a second (Hodgson 1840, 413, 419). By 1505, the tenants of Walwick Grange were the Errington family who subsequently bought Walwick and Walwick Meadows in 1555 (Hodgson 1840, 413).

Unusually, by the time the township was surveyed for a tithe commutation award in 1838, Walwick was divided between two ecclesiastical parishes. The bulk of the township fell within Warden parish (NRO DT 476L), but a small area at the north east corner of the township, mostly to the north of the Military Road was included in Simonburn parish (NRO DT 425/3M). The reasons for this are unclear, but the fact that the 18th-century stretch of road from Chollerford Bridge towards Walwick village formed part of the boundary between the two parts suggests that boundary was subject to relatively late regularisation and adjustment.

Archaeological evidence for medieval activity at Chesters is limited. The remains of walls, which may signify medieval occupation, have been identified running diagonally over the southern guardchamber of the west gate. The surviving pattern of ridge and furrow suggests that much of the site was under arable cultivation during this period, although that activity may have been intermittent. The presence of stone buildings would have made ploughing more difficult and the area may conceivably have been attractive only in optimal phases when arable cultivation was particularly extensive. How long the buildings of the fort or the vicus survived as substantial standing structures is unclear but it is likely that they were subject to increasing stone-robbing, particularly for the better quality worked stone.

Five columns used in the nave of the church of St Giles, Chollerton, for example, probably derive from the site, perhaps from the headquarters building (*principia*) of the fort (Bidwell & Snape 1993, 4; *CCP*: 1, 6-7).

### **5.1.5 17th century to the present day**

From the late 17th century onwards Chesters was increasingly visited by antiquaries interested in the remains of the Roman Wall, beginning with Thomas Machell in 1691 and continuing with Horsley in the 1720s and Pococke, Wallis and Hutchinson later in the century. It is clear from their accounts that the Roman remains were still visible at this stage, but agricultural cultivation was continuing, something also demonstrated by the survey map produced in 1749 prior to the construction of the Military Road. The latter shows the fields around 'Walwick Chesters' marked with schematic parallel lines denoting ridge and furrow, particularly to the north and west of the fort. The beginning of the end of this regime probably occurred when the Erringtons shifted their seat from Walwick Grange to their newly-built mansion at Chesters, just to the west of the fort, in 1771. Certainly following Nathaniel Clayton's acquisition of the estate in 1796, the transformation of the landscape from a mixture of arable and pasture to a parkland proceeded apace Bidwell & Snape 1993, 6-8; *CCP*: 1, 8-10). Under Nathaniel's son John Clayton increasing attention was dedicated to the investigation of the Roman remains with extensive excavations in the fort, continuing from the 1840s up to the end of the century. This culminated in the construction of the Museum and adjacent Lodge, designed by the Newcastle architect Frank W Rich and completed in 1896, six years after John Clayton's death (*CCP*: 1, 13-15).

These processes of investigation, display and interpretation of the site continued in the 20th centuries and up to the present. These have involved continued excavation, though on a smaller scale than that undertaken by Clayton (with the exception of the work on the bridge in the 1982-3), guardianship, scheduling, World Heritage Site status and a gradual improvement of visitor facilities adjacent to the Museum. This last process has had the most significant impact on the proposed development site. The initial car park was created after the fort and bathhouse came into guardianship in 1954 and enlarged to its present size in the mid 1970s. A small cafe built of timber clapboard and located to the south of the present ticket office had been erected by 1968. The ticket office/shop was designed in 1973 and built by 1977. It was altered to its present form in the mid 1980s (*CCP*: 1, 18-20, 130, 159ff).

## **5.2 Specific Issues**

### **5.2.1 Direct evidence of archaeological deposits: previous interventions**

Previous archaeological interventions within the area or immediate vicinity of the proposed development are limited to two watching briefs conducted in February 1977 and January 1978 during the excavation of service trenches to the ticket office/shop and to the cafe ('Lucullus Larder') respectively. These yielded no evidence of archaeological features or deposits. The trenches dug for the ticket office services were 0.6m deep within disturbed/made up ground (*SMR* 9320-9321). This redeposited material is likely to have resulted from the construction of the museum and lodge at the end of the 19th century. The grassy area between the museum and the ticket office is noticeably higher (c. 1m) than that immediately to the south (see pl. 7), suggesting that, even allowing for the general upward slope of the topography, some landscaping may have occurred during construction of the museum. The area was originally used as the custodian's garden and has been gardened within living memory (*CCP*: 1, 15, 2, 69, citing comments by the on-site staff), although there is no indication on the 2nd and 3rd edition Ordnance Survey maps as to how this might have been laid out.

Despite this negative evidence, it must be recognised that the 1977/78 interventions were small in scale and limited in scope and cannot therefore be considered conclusive proof of an absence of archaeological features throughout the museum and ticket office/shop area. No archaeological monitoring during the digging of foundation trenches for the ticket office is documented and, moreover, significant features might conceivably be preserved beneath the layer of made ground.

### **5.2.2 The area north of the fort: retrogressive analysis**

A more general consideration of the area to the north of the fort is reliant on four main pieces of evidence: the historic maps; antiquarian descriptions, in particular that provided by Hutchinson; the earthwork and aerial photographic survey by the RCHME; and most recently the geophysical survey of the field north east of the fort, undertaken by Timescape Surveys in the summer of 2001. These different elements may be used to retrogressively analyse the development of the area, beginning with the most recent features and working back.

The historic maps give no indication that there were buildings on the site of the proposed development prior to the Museum and Lodge. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey (c. 1860) does provide a detailed record of the area prior to the construction of the Museum and adjacent Lodge (cf. fig. 16). There was an existing gate which opened onto this area from the road, but this probably only gave access to the fields to the north of the fort, as it is not associated with a road or track leading into the estate. A smaller lodge [5], situated c. 55m to the west, had already been constructed by this date and also featured on MacLauchlan's survey of the Roman Wall, a few years previously, but not on any earlier map. It was located beside the Military Road (pl. 6), at the entrance to the drive leading up to Chesters mansion, and was probably built following the construction of the mansion in 1771. The 2nd edition Ordnance Survey (fig. 11) indicates that, by 1896, a new driveway had been added which entered the estate beside the museum lodge, and this now became the principal entrance. This remodelling was presumably associated with the construction of the museum and lodge. A small building is also shown on 2nd and later editions, 35m east of the museum, on the south side of the steam bounding the site. The function of this structure is unknown.

The creation of the stretch of the Military Road immediately north of Chesters had the most significant impact on the proposed development area, prior to the building of the museum. The 1749 survey (fig. 17) suggests that this section of the route was already in existence. It may have been constructed earlier in the 18th century to connect with the new Chollerford Bridge [30], which replaced the medieval bridge after 1733 and was itself destroyed by the great flood of 1771 and replaced by the present structure in 1775. The 1749 survey reveals another trackway [7] running WNW-ESE, which also passed to the north of the fort, but on a more southerly alignment, and was probably the predecessor of the current route. This earlier lane connected Walwick with Humshaugh via Humshaugh Mill at Waterside, a short distance upstream from the Roman bridge. It may originally have led directly to the medieval bridge [31], which lay roughly midway between the Roman Bridge and 18th century Chollerford Bridge. The track is possibly to be identified with a linear ditched feature traced by geophysical survey just north of the fort. The lane had presumably developed into a sunken holloway as it passed north of the fort, like the trackway northwest of the fort [33]. The geophysical survey suggested that the feature was stone lined. Such stone might represent the remains of stone walls on either side of the lane to prevent livestock straying on to the arable land on either side, or stone cleared off the ploughland and piled along the roadside, or conceivably buildings alongside the trackway.

A second lane [33] is shown on the Military Road survey running northward from Warden and Walwick Grange and passing just to the west of the fort to link up with the WNW-ESE oriented lane. Armstrong's map (fig. 4), published 20 years later, shows the route was subsequently extended

northward to link up with the Military Road. This route is marked on the 1st edition Ordnance survey by a line of trees approaching the south-west angle of the fort and another leading away from the area of the west gate in a NNW direction, reaching the Military Road at the point where the earliest lodge stands. It was evidently long out of use by this stage (it is not shown by either Fryer or Greenwood in 1820 and 1828 respectively), but can still be traced as a holloway north west of the fort.

The 1749 survey depicts the area to the north of the WNW-ESE oriented lane as covered by ridged arable fields, suggesting that the development site was under plough up to the mid 18th century and the transformation of the estate into parkland had not begun by that date. When exactly cultivation ceased is unclear, but the Clayton family, who acquired the estate in 1796, only appear to have carried out landscaping work. The shift from ploughland to parkland may in fact have started in 1771 when the Erringtons built the first mansion house at Chesters (cf. Bidwell & Snape 1993, 7, 9-10). A complex pattern of ridge and furrow earthworks associated with the arable cultivation survives in the fields between the fort and the Museum and ticket office site. These earthworks were recorded by the RCHME in 1993 and comprise a mixture of broad curving rigg, to the east, north east and more distant north, and straighter narrow ridging to the west and particularly to the immediate north of the fort (fig. 18). Ploughing may have begun as early as the medieval period, the great depth of soil which has washed down over the bath house to the east of the fort being indicative of the prolonged period of cultivation of the estate. However it is quite possible that the ploughing was intermittent (comments by Humphrey Welfare cited in Bidwell & Snape 1993, 10).

The remains of an extensive *vicus* were noted by 18th-century antiquarians and have been traced on aerial photography. The photographs were plotted by the RCHME in 1992-93 (see fig. 15), amplifying earlier work by Salway (1965, 78-80, fig. 8). The aerial photographic survey only revealed traces of settlement to the south, south west and east of the fort, but nowhere north of Hadrian's Wall. However, Hutchinson, whose description of the site has been termed 'the most detailed of all the eighteenth century antiquarians' (Bidwell & Snape 1993, 6), asserts that 'on the south side, without the *vallum* and foss, many ruins of buildings appear, and some on the north' (1778, 1, 73). The '*vallum* and foss' in this context signify the fort curtain and ditch and his comments would therefore imply that traces of some buildings were evident on the north side of the fort. The existence of these structures has never been corroborated and without further information their nature and extent cannot be defined. Bruce, by contrast, stated that 'no habitations have been erected to the north of the encampment or the Wall' (1867, 155f), although the appearance of the site may have altered significantly in the century after Hutchinson had visited the site, as a result of all the landscaping work undertaken by Nathaniel and John Clayton. The presence of Roman extra-mural buildings north of the Wall is generally considered highly unlikely, but, as Bidwell and Snape (1993, 26-7) admit, Hutchinson was usually a reliable observer, with an understanding of what he was witnessing, and hence the possibility that he saw some kind of man-made features of some date cannot be discounted. The suggestion that there could be structures to the north of Hadrian's Wall associated with the fort or civil settlement in some way - funerary monuments or quarry features perhaps - is still intriguing therefore.

Presence of ridge and furrow over the fields north of the fort would not exclude the possibility that traces of buildings were visible there in the 18th century, since ridge and furrow is also evident to the south of the fort, overlying the surviving remains of the *vicus* there, as demonstrated by the aerial photographic evidence. It was presumably there that Hutchinson and other antiquaries observed the remains of the *vicus*. Possible traces of buildings were tentatively identified by the geophysical survey undertaken in the field north east of the fort, including a large building (c. 23m x 10m) at the southern extremity of the survey (i.e. east of the fort and just north of the Wall) and masonry building standing within a possible ditched enclosure (c. 35m x 18m) at the northern end of the field. Furthermore an extensive spread of negative anomalies stretching across much of the survey area between the fort and

the museum was interpreted as a possible cemetery. It was suggested that the anomalies might represent *mausolea*. The highly provisional nature of these conclusions must be emphasised, however.

Horsley (1732, 144) suggested that a road ran north east from the north gate of the fort to join Dere Street, but no evidence has been recovered to support this suggestion (Bidwell & Snape 1993, 27-8; *CCP*: 1, 129). The 2001 geophysical survey revealed no evidence of a road leading north out of the fort, although it did appear that the causeway crossing the ditches had not been cut.

The area of the museum and the current ticket office/shop lies 150m north of the fort. This puts them beyond the zone in which additional defensive works, such as pits (*lilia*) or entanglement defences (*cippi*) of the kind recently uncovered immediately in front of the Hadrian's Wall curtain at Shields Road in Byker, Throckley and Wallsend (Bidwell 1999, 95-6; Mckelvey 2003), have been found or might be considered likely. The *lilia* at Rough Castle on the Antonine Wall, which are located beyond the Wall's defensive ditch extend up to 60m from the fort curtain.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

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### 6.1 Summary

The following conclusions have been derived from the above assessment of both discrete and more extensive historical landscape components:

1. Previous limited investigation in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development, conducted by means of monitoring during the excavation of service trenches, has revealed no evidence of archaeological features or deposits. However, in view of the limited depth and extent of these interventions, this does not constitute decisive evidence that no remains are present.
2. The historic map evidence provides no evidence for the existence of any structure on the site prior to the construction of the current buildings, beginning with the Museum and Lodge at the end of the 19th century. The nearest earlier building is the lodge situated to the west of the Museum, at the end of the drive leading to Chesters Mansion, probably constructed at some stage between 1771 and 1854.
3. Surviving ridge and furrow earthworks in the fields to the south of the development site and historic map evidence indicate that the area was subject to arable cultivation during the medieval period and up to the later 18th century, although that cultivation may not have been continuous. Such cultivation will potentially have damaged any archaeological deposits and features within the footprint of the development, but the extent of preservation elsewhere at Chesters, within the fort and the *vicus*, where ploughing was also undertaken in the medieval/early modern eras, suggests significant structures and deposits could still remain.
4. The distance of the proposed development from the fort renders it less likely that defensive outworks - pits or entanglements (*lilia* and *cippi*) - for the fort or the Wall curtain would be situated within the development footprint. Buildings associated with the *vicus* are also generally considered unlikely to the north of Hadrian's Wall. Both these conclusions are only presumptive, however.
5. A late 18th century antiquarian description and recent geophysical survey results provide tentative evidence for the presence of structures or features in the field to the north of the fort. Such features might conceivably extend beyond the surveyed area into the development site. However the existence of these features has not been definitively confirmed, and their extent and identification are accordingly extremely uncertain. Only a very preliminary summary of the geophysical survey results was available for consideration during the preparation of this assessment.

### 6.3 Impacts

#### 6.3.1 Direct Impacts

1. Construction of the proposed new visitor centre will severely impact on any archaeological features or deposits within its footprint. The survival of any such deposits cannot be substantiated in our present state of knowledge. Equally, however, the possibility of such



survival cannot yet be decisively excluded, particularly in the area not currently built over, where the west wing of the new building will be located.

2. Relocation of the pathway leading from the museum to the north gate will have some impact on the archaeological features intersected by its course. These include evident ridge and furrow and a trackway along the north side of the fort used in the mid 18th century, but possibly of much earlier origin, identified by historic map evidence and geophysical survey. Other features, which have been identified by geophysical survey alone, include a possible cemetery and a ditched enclosure at the north end of the field.
3. Bidwell and Snape (1993, 28) comment that the shallow soil cover over the remains of the fort and its environs makes them vulnerable to damage by any non-archaeological intervention. The new footpath system, which it is proposed will run around the perimeter of the fort, follow the course of the principal streets within it, and connect to the bridge and bathhouse, may therefore potentially have an adverse impact on surviving archaeological remains.
4. Removal of the existing path from the museum to the fort will provide an opportunity to archaeologically examine a strip across the intervening field prior to the reinstatement of turf.

### **6.3.2 Visual Impacts**

1. The site of the proposed new building is largely shrouded from view of the fort and the other Roman monuments by trees, hedges and the falling gradient (see pls. 3-4). The visual impact of the proposed developments on the Roman monument complex is therefore minimal.
2. The new building will impact visually upon the grade II\* listed museum and the associated lodge. However, the existing ticket office/shop has already intruded on the setting of the museum. The west wing of the new building will be positioned closer to the museum than the present structure, but this need not constitute a significantly adverse impact. An attractive, sympathetically-designed building may confer a more coherent aspect to the whole complex..

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

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The following work is recommended in the within and adjacent to the proposed development to evaluate and mitigate the archaeological impact of the new visitor facilities. All these recommendations remain subject to consideration by the County Archaeologist.

### 7.1 Evaluation

**7.1.1** Evaluation is required to determine whether significant archaeological deposits survive within the area of the proposed development. In view of the restricted area and the likely presence of service pipes, cables etc., it is considered this evaluation should take the form of limited trial trench excavation, rather than geophysical survey. The trench(es) should be positioned in the open area between the museum and the present ticket office, on the site of the west wing of the new building. It is possible that this evaluation phase may identify a need for further evaluation or mitigation work.

### 7.2 Mitigation

- 7.2.1** The new footpath connecting the fort with the museum and visitor facilities should as far as possible be designed to minimise the impact upon any cultural features and deposits intersected by its course. Should intrusive work prove necessary to establish the path, archaeological monitoring should be undertaken to mitigate the impact by record.
- 7.2.2** The proposed new footpath system around and within the fort should be designed to effect minimal intrusion upon the archaeological deposits. The preferred option on this basis would be the current type of closely cropped grass 'paths', achieved by mowing certain strips more frequently and to a lower height (30-40mm versus 75-100mm) than the remainder of the site.
- 7.2.3** Following the removal of the existing path between the museum and the fort, and prior to the reinstatement of a turf covering, the opportunity should be taken to archaeologically examine the strip across the intervening field, so revealed. Examination should take the form of cleaning and recording of the deposits and features apparent upon removal of the tarmac surface and substructure of the path.

## 8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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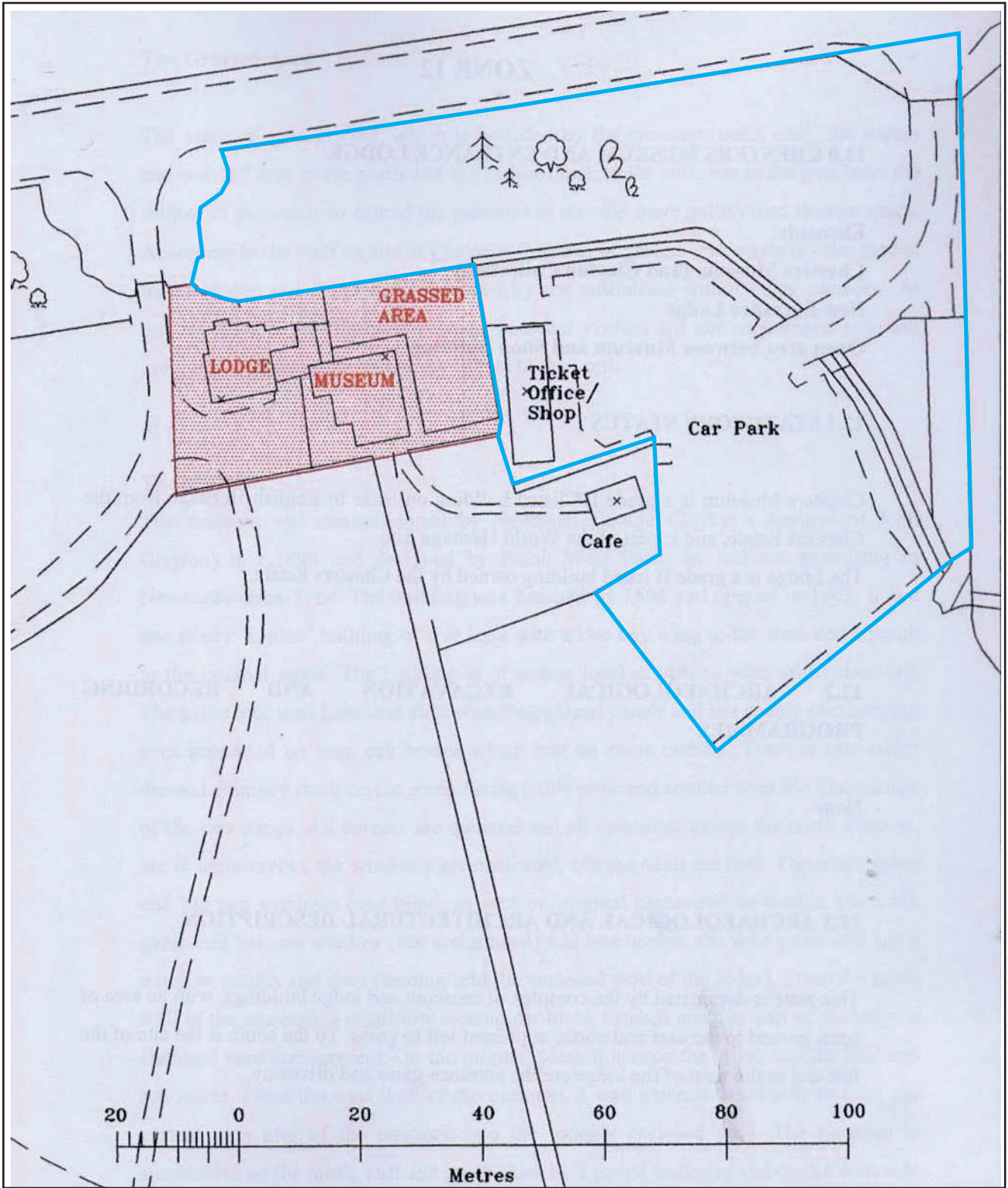
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*Figure 1: Conservation Plan Zones 12 (Museum & Lodge) and 13 (ticket office & car park)*

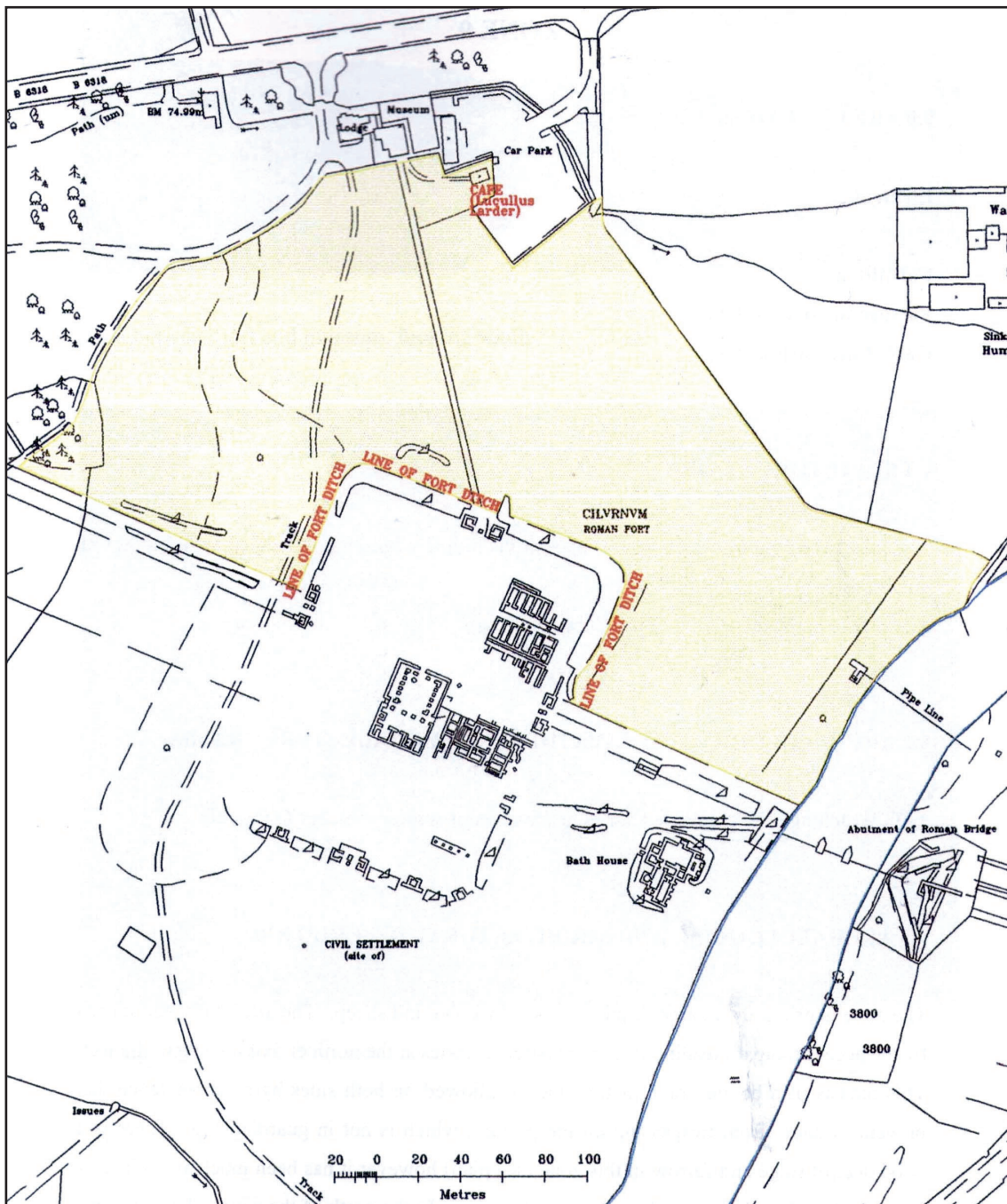


Figure 2: The area north of the Fort (extract from the Chesters Conservation Plan - Zone 9)

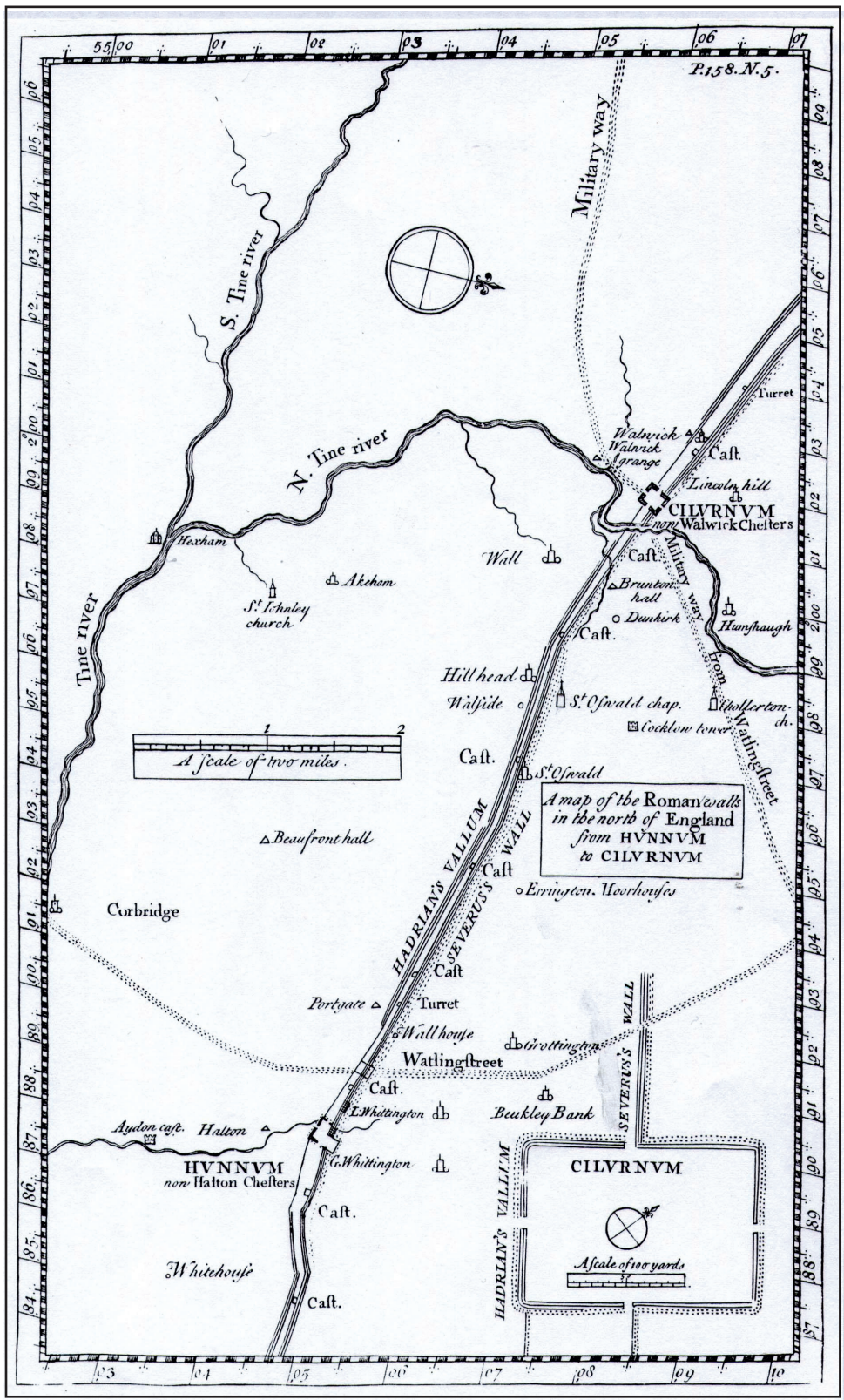


Figure 3: Horsley's map of the Roman Wall - Hunnum to Cilurnum



Figure 4: Extract from Armstrong's map of Northumberland 1769



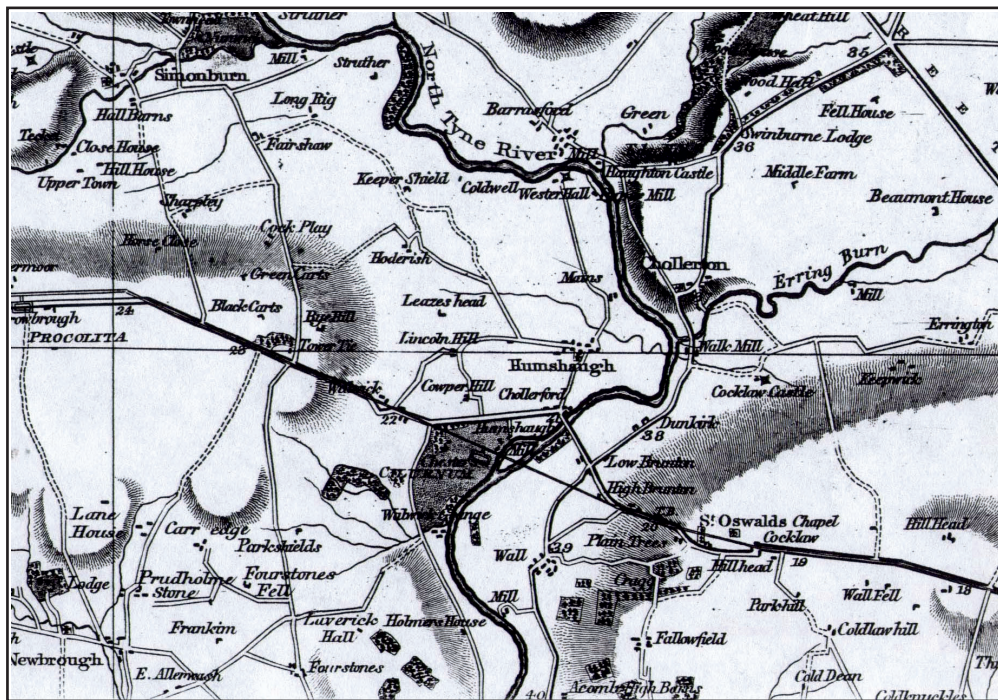


Figure 5: Extract from Fryer's map of Northumberland 1820

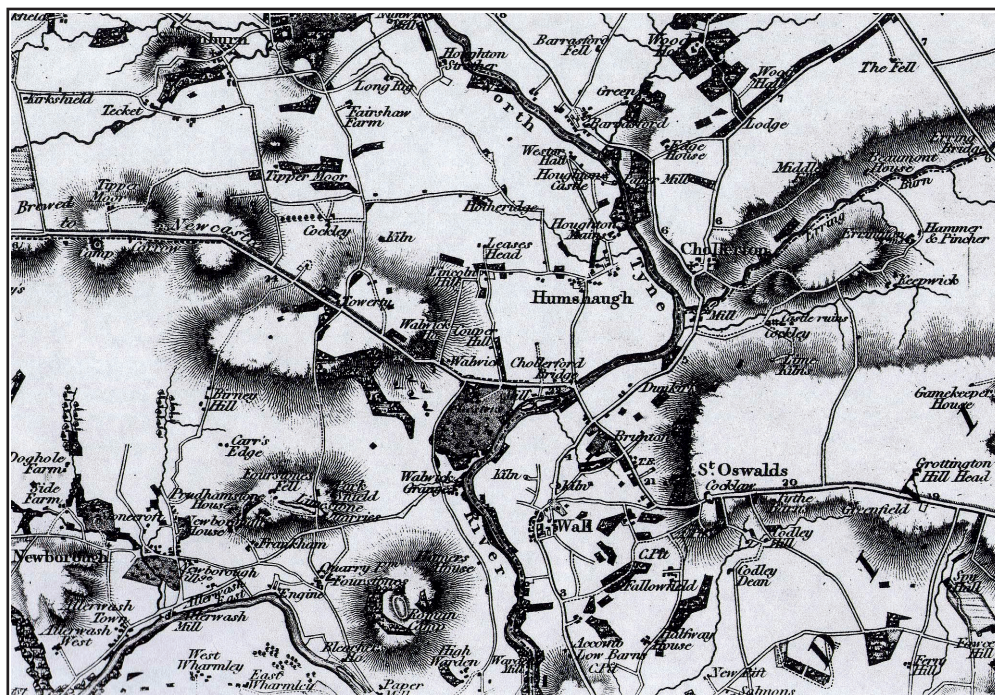
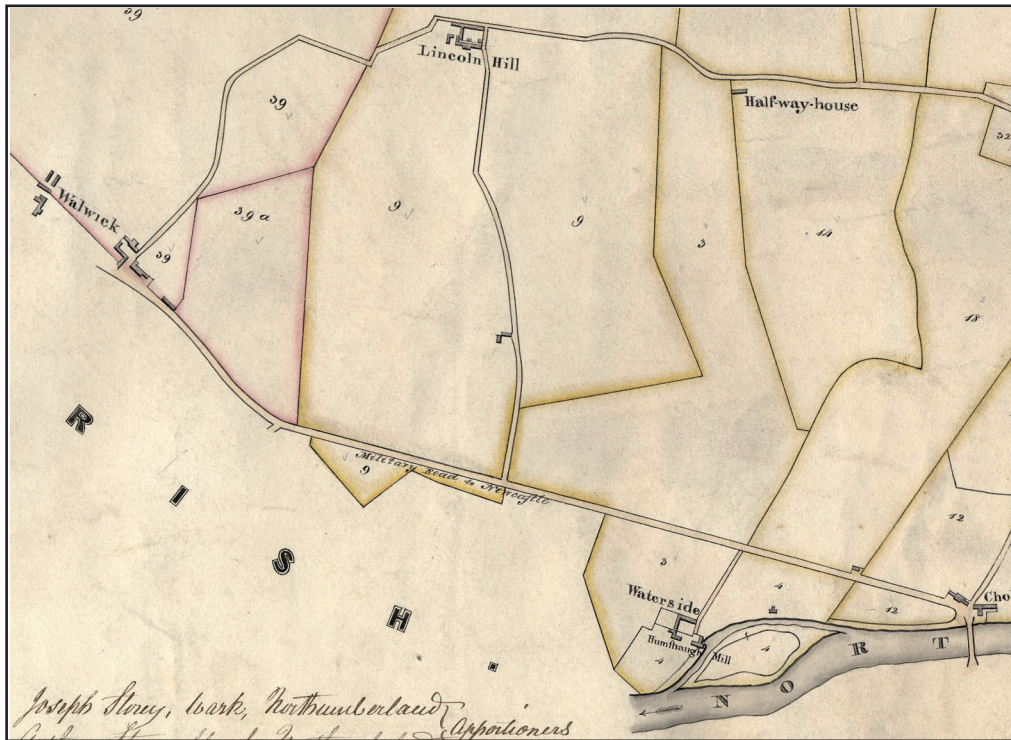


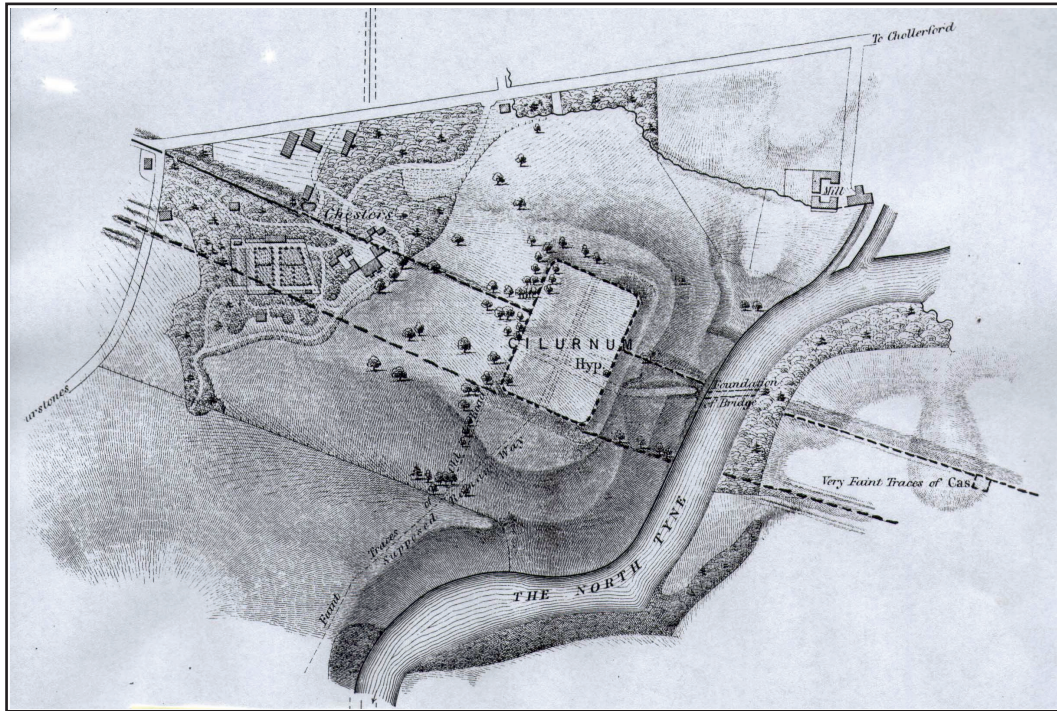
Figure 6: Extract from Greenwood's map of Northumberland 1828



**Figure 7:** Extract from Simonburn Parish Tithe Map 1838



**Figure 8:** Extract from Warden Parish Tithe Map 1838



*Figure 9: MacLauchlan's Plan of Chesters*

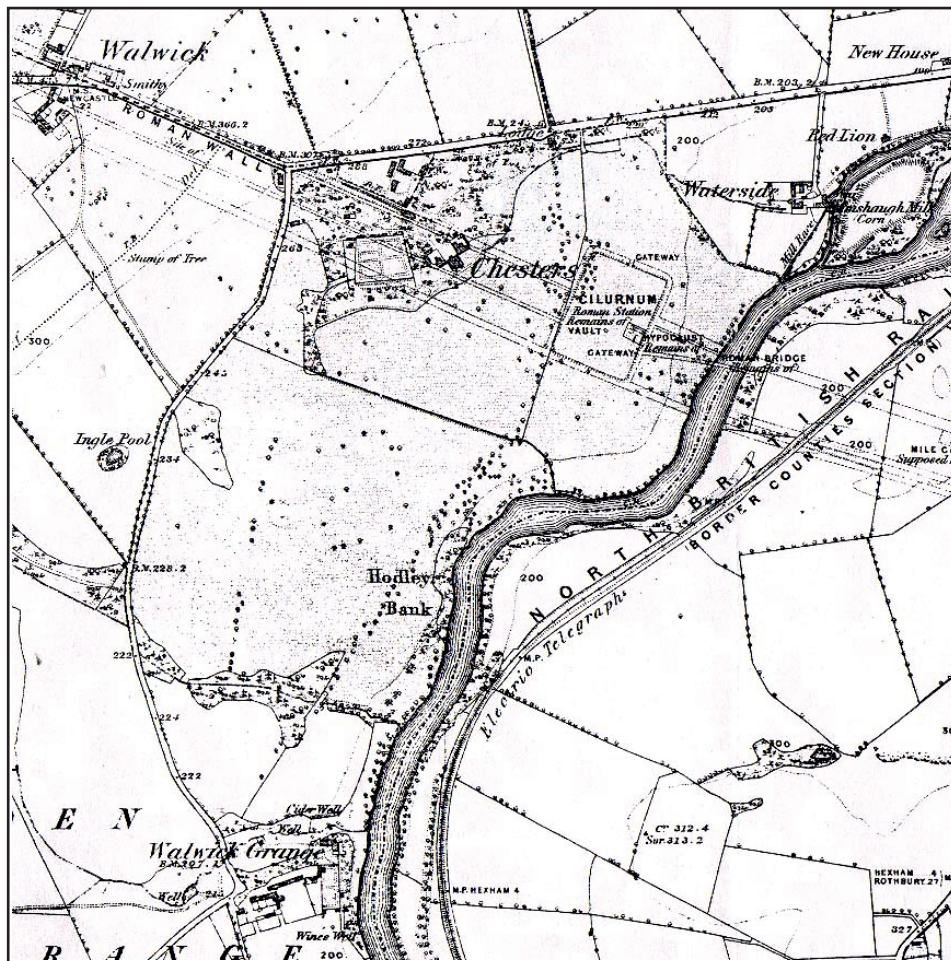


Figure 10: Extract from 1st Edition OS 6 inch series, sheet 85

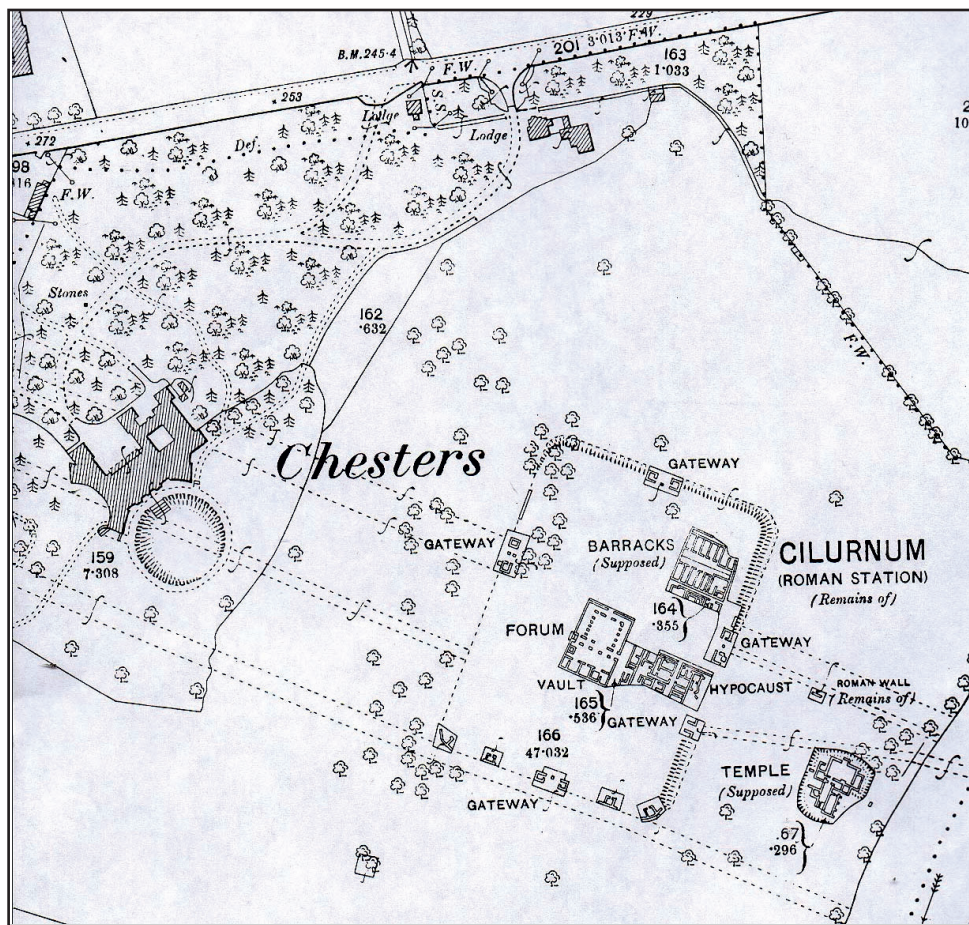


Figure 11: Extract from 2nd Edition OS 1:2500 series

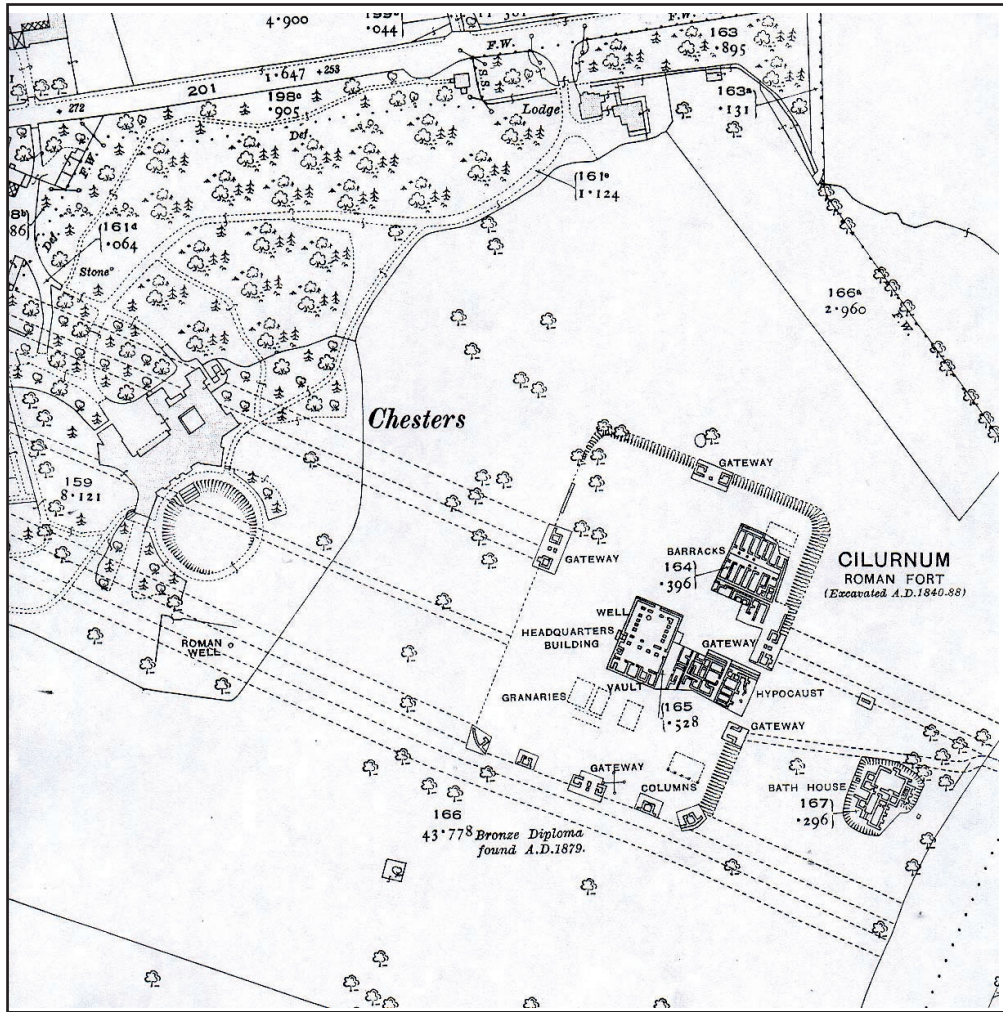


Figure 12: Extract from 3rd Edition OS 1:2500 series

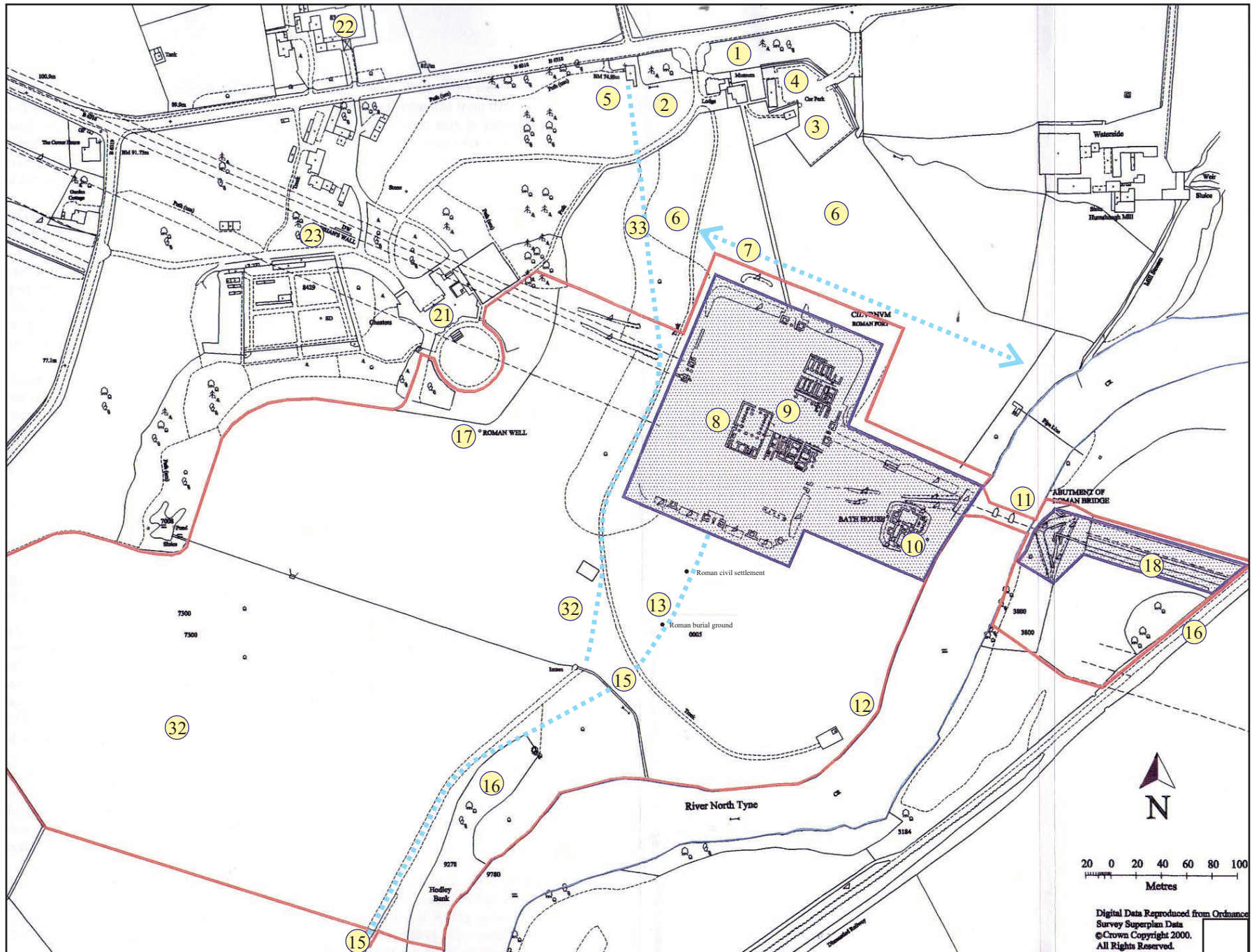
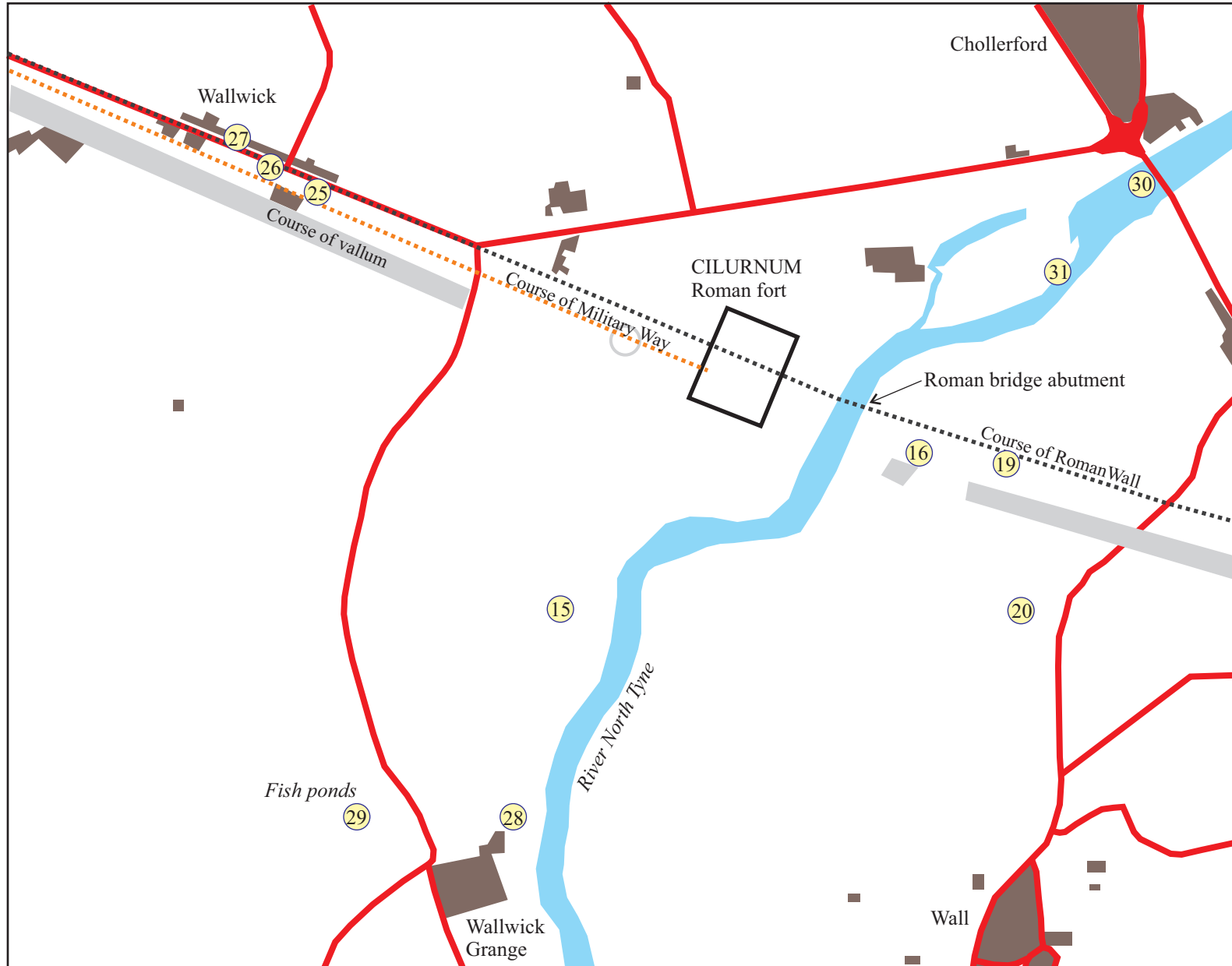


Figure 13: Sites of cultural heritage significance listed in the catalogue (Section 4): core area

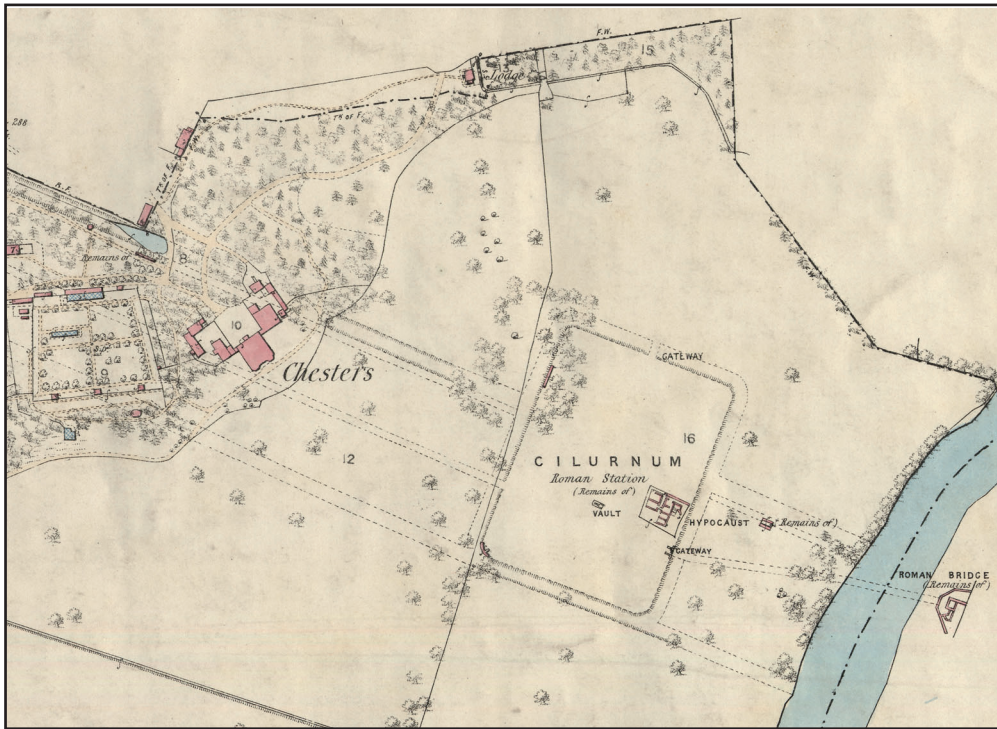


**Figure 14:** Sites of cultural heritage significance listed in the catalogue (Section 4): wider area

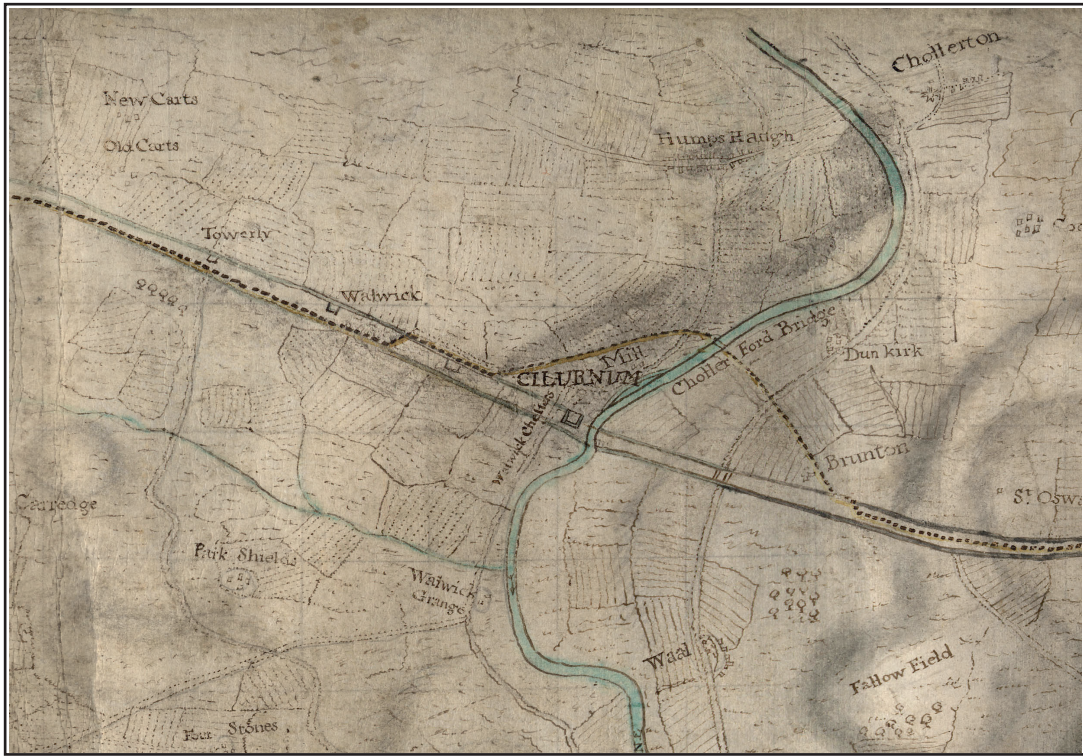




**Figure 15:** *Chesters Fort and Vicus - Aerial Photographic Plot by RCHME*



*Figure 16: Extract from 1st Edition OS, 1:2500 series*



*Figure 17: (ZAN MSM5) Extract from the Military Road Survey, 1749*



**Figure 18:** RCHME survey of ridge and furrow at Chesters  
 (extract from the Chesters Conservation Plan)



*Plate 1: The south gable of the museum building*



*Plate 2: The ticket office/shop from the east*



*Plate 3: The museum and entrance lodge viewed from the NW corner of the fort*



*Plate 4: The site of the proposed development and the intervening field viewed from the NE angle of the fort*



*Plate 5: The main gateway to Chesters Estate beside the museum lodge*



*Plate 6: The original entrance lodge for Chesters Estate*



*Plate 7: The open area viewed from the south, showing the rise in ground level*



*Plate 8: The View from NW angle of the fort looking ENE towards Humshaugh Mill*