

LAND EAST OF ROCHESTER HOUSE,
ROCHESTER, OTTERBURN,
NORTHUMBERLAND

HERITAGE STATEMENT



Prepared for: <i>Mr W Amos</i>	By: <i>The Archaeological Practice Ltd.</i>
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<i>Project code:</i> AP22/34	<i>Stage:</i> Final	<i>By:</i> RC	<i>Completion date:</i> 29/02/22
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Frontispiece: View over the site from the south-west.

NGR: NY 83247 98233 (approx. centre)

Project Code: AP 22/34

Oasis Number: thearcha2-516424

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SUMMARY

This report constitutes a desk-based heritage statement undertaken by The Archaeological Practice Ltd at the request of Mr Willie Amos with respect to a small roadside site lying north-east of Rochester House farm at Low Rochester, near Otterburn, Northumberland. The report incorporates an audit of both discrete and more extensive historical landscape components and presents a synthesis of the overall chronology of the defined area. It identifies cultural heritage constraints within the area of the proposed development and makes recommendations regarding the need or otherwise for further work to mitigate the impact of the scheme. The report also includes consideration of cultural heritage sites adjacent to the development site with particular consideration given to those sites considered in the context of visual impact constraints.

It is concluded unlikely that any features or finds of cultural heritage significance survive in the assessment area, but any surviving there are likely to be impacted by the works as proposed. The indirect impacts of the proposals, including the impact of the proposed works programme, have also been assessed and it is concluded that the visual impact of the new build on other heritage assets and the wider landscape is likely to be negligible due to the distance to other heritage assets and lack of intervisibility with the majority of those within 1 km.

It is recommended that, should the works proceed, an archaeological Watching Brief be carried out during any construction works where groundworks are likely to occur, in order to record any unknown archaeological remains as they appear.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Assessment

The following heritage statement was undertaken by The Archaeological Practice Ltd at the request of Mr Willie Amos, its purpose being to inform a planning decision regarding the potential impact of a small new build development on an area of land on the west side of Bremenium Way between Low and High Rochester, Otterburn, Northumberland.

The *National Planning Policy Framework – NPPF (MHCLG 2019)* enables planning authorities to request assessments of archaeological potential in order to ascertain the nature and extent of any remains likely to be impacted by development, and inform upon appropriate mitigation measures. At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (NPPF – see *MHCLG 2019, 5*), which effectively means that local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area; and will tend to favour granting planning permission to developments which meet this criteria, unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

NPPF states that:

“Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal” (MHCLG 2019, Note 190).

The NPPF makes it clear that the significance of a heritage asset derives not only from its physical presence and historic fabric but also from its setting. Although consideration of setting is somewhat subjective and necessarily a matter of informed judgement, guidance is provided to assist decision-making by ensuring it takes place within a clear framework and is as transparent and consistent as possible. Points to be considered include *Intervisibility*, the potential for views to/from archaeological or historic landscape features to be compromised.

1.2 Methodology

The heritage statement comprises an assessment of the site which will:

- Define 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 assessment area.
- Provide an assessment of archaeological potential and likely direct and indirect impacts upon the proposed development site and with respect to the setting of other heritage assets in its wider environs (Section 6).

- Provide conclusions with respect to the known and potential archaeological significance of the assessment area (Section 7).
- Recommend further work to define more clearly the nature of the archaeological record and facilitate management or mitigation of this resource (Section 8).

2. ASSESSMENT CONTEXT

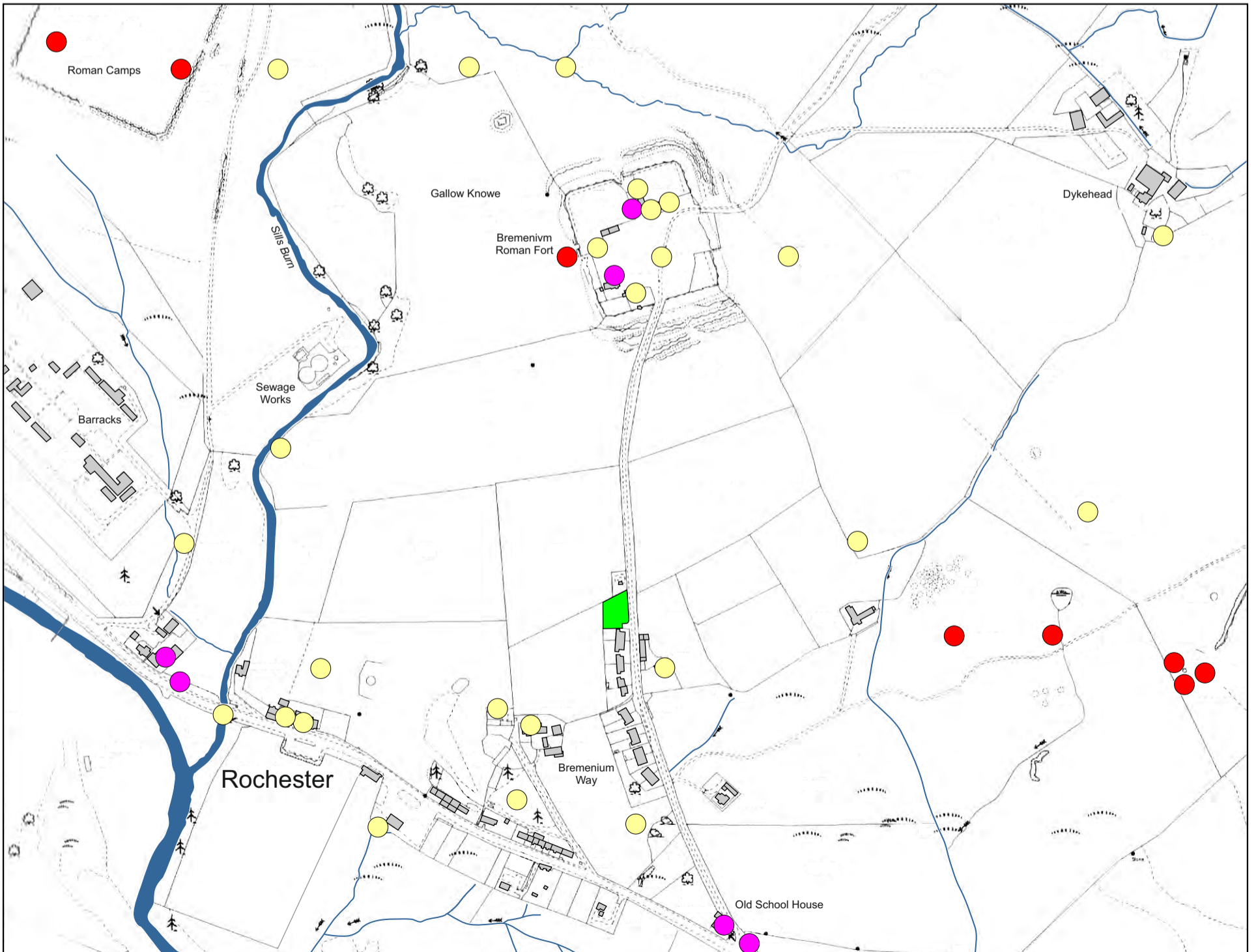
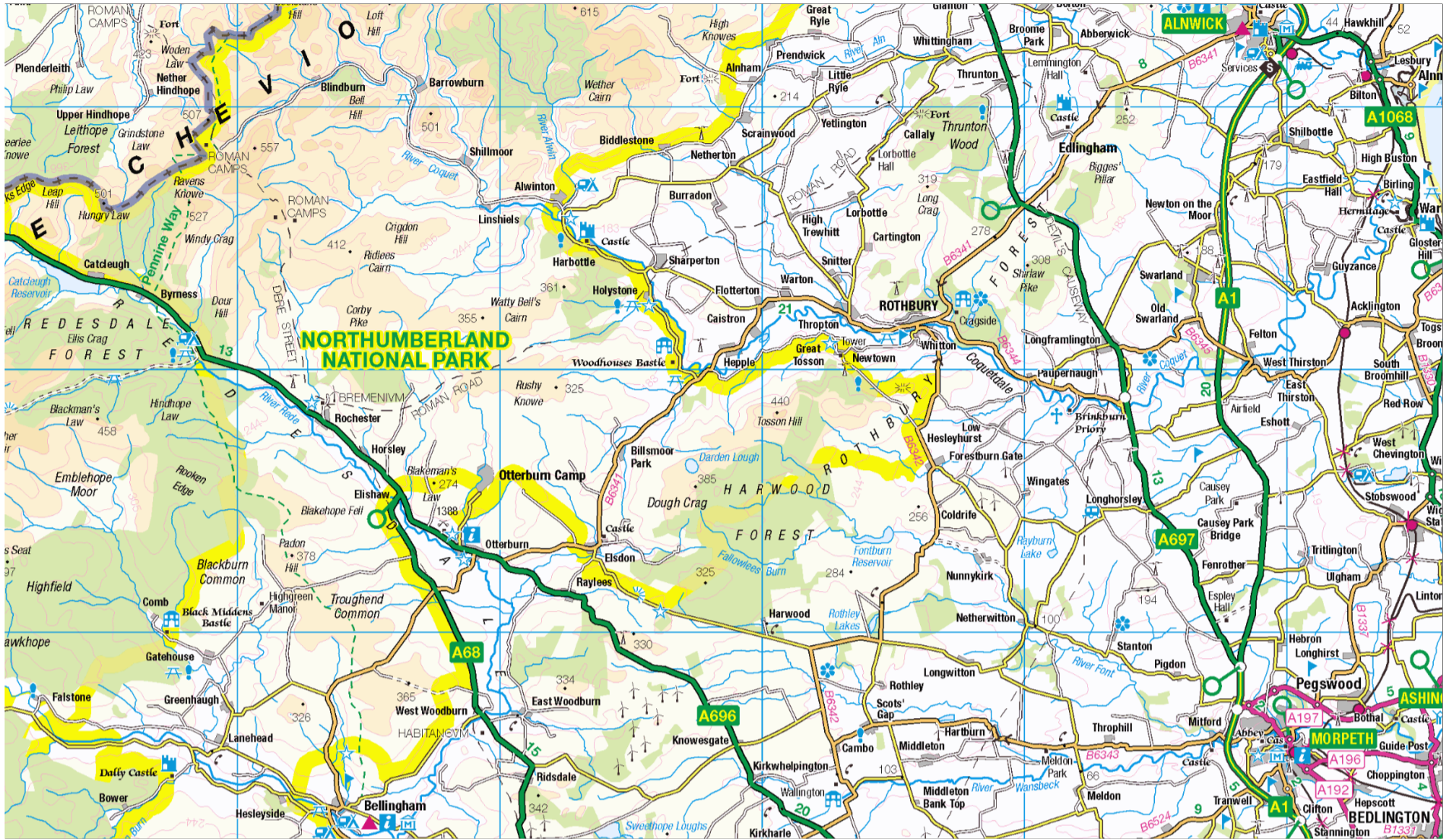
2.1 Location and Extent of the Assessment Area (*Illus. 01-03*).

The assessment focuses on a site in the village of Rochester which is situated in the upper reaches of Redesdale in central Northumberland, at the heart of the Northumberland National Park. Today, it comprises two main settlements, the hamlet of High Rochester located within the walls of the Roman station of Bremenium, and the larger settlement of Rochester about half a kilometre to the south, along the north side of the A68 road linking Newcastle to Scotland and the borders. The western limit of the settlement is marked by the valley of the Sills Burn, which flows into the Rede just above Rochester village, while to the north lies a vast expanse of high barren moorland.

The current development site of c. 0.05 ha. lies at the northern edge of Low Rochester (*NGR: NY 83247 98233 (approx. centre)*) on a minor road running from the A68 up to the Roman fort site at High Rochester. The site adjoins a row of modern houses on the west side of the road (although a gap will be left between these and the new build) and is almost opposite an older farmstead known as Hopesley House. On its north side the site is bounded by a field wall which separates it from the first of two large enclosed fields which occupy the area between the site and the Roman fort to the north. Immediately on the north side of the field wall abutting the north side of the site is an enclosed reservoir of brick and concrete construction with partially obscures views to the north from the site.

2.2 Nature of Proposed Developments

It is proposed to construct a new build property on the site along with accompanying service works and landscaping for gardens, paths and other hard-standing areas.



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Illus. 01 & 02: The proposed development site (highlighted green) shown in relation to sites of known Cultural Heritage importance (Scheduled Sites in red; Listed Buildings in purple; others in yellow) in Rochester Village, with the site of proposed new development shown in green.

3. SOURCES FOR ASSESSMENT

3.1 Archival Material and Secondary Sources

The report collates evidence from a wide range of published, documentary and cartographic sources consulted in the following archival repositories:

- *The Archaeological Practice archive (AP)*
- *Northumberland Historic Environment Record (HER)*
- *Northumberland Archives, Woodhorn (NRO)*
- *National Monument Record (NMR)*

3.2 Types of Information

Included amongst the various kinds of information used from each of the above sources to assess the significance of the assessment area are the following:

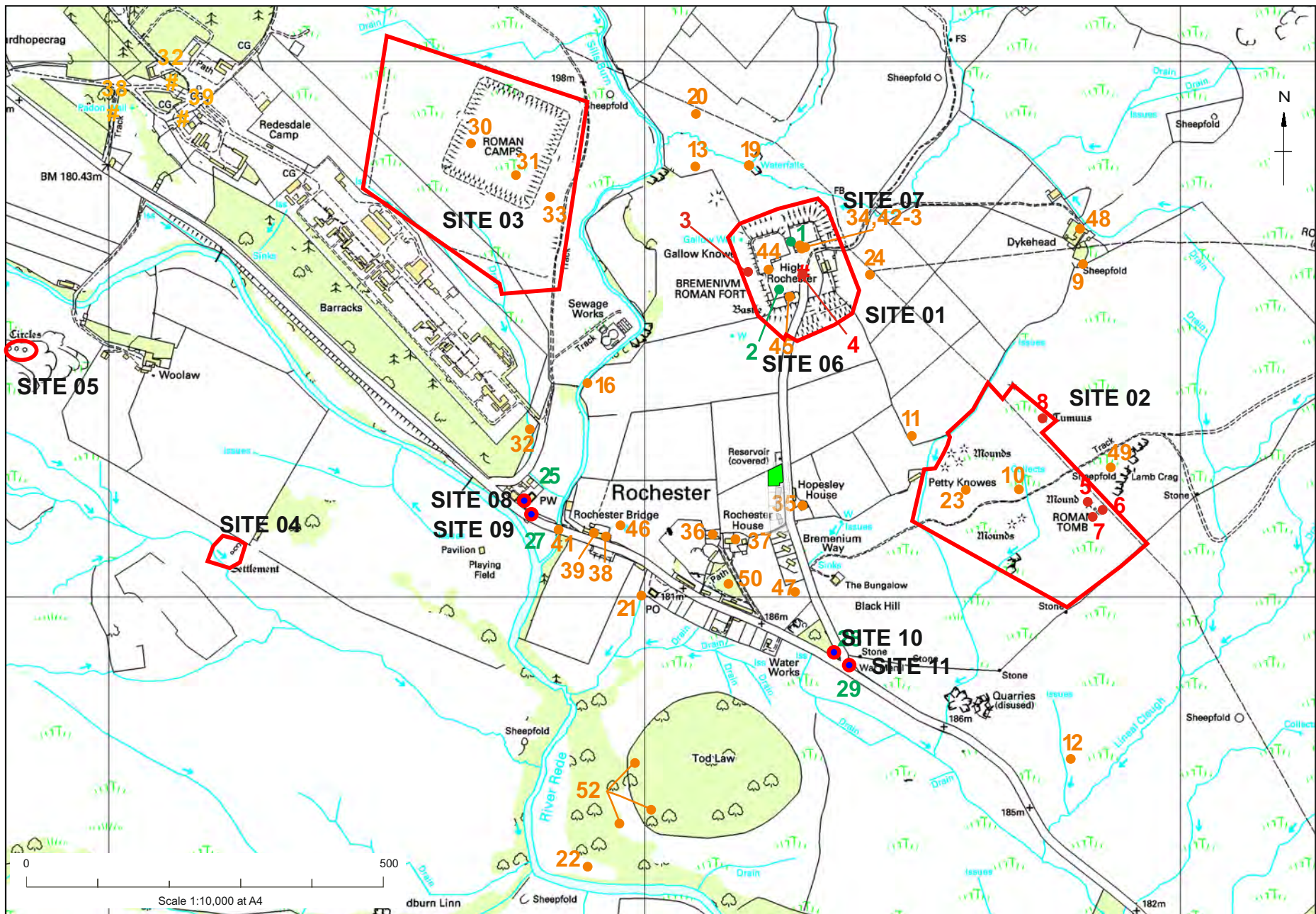
3.2.1 Protected Sites and Monuments and those listed in the County HER

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 a defined area. There are no Scheduled Monuments within or immediately adjacent to the site, but a number of important Roman sites with designated status exist in the locality, the nearest being the Roman fort [**SITE 1, Illus 03**] 515 m to the north, within which are two Listed bastles and which also includes Listed upstanding Roman masonry. To the east of the site the Petty Knowes Roman cemetery [**SITE 2, Illus 03**] extends over a wide area west of Petty Knowes farm, some 535 m due east at its nearest point from the current site of interest. 1,100 m north-west of the site (700 m west of the Roman fort) is the Scheduled site of two Roman camps [**SITE 3, Illus 03**], one within the other, situated on a north-east facing slope 200 m south-west of Dere Street Roman road, the largest with maximum dimensions of 311 m north-south by 372 m east-west. West of the site are a number of iron age or Romano-British enclosure sites, the nearest, 1,950 m distant and visible as a rectangular enclosure with remains of four or more roundhouses in the north-west side [**SITE 4, Illus 03**], measures max. 32 m south-west to north-east by 31 m north-west to south-east and has two entrances in the south east side. An unenclosed settlement [**SITE 5, Illus 03**], probably of similar date range lies a further 1 km to the north-west with another enclosed settlement c 500 m to the west, and a larger site comprising a Romano-British enclosed settlement and medieval settlement south of Burdhope, some 500 m further west.

Listed Buildings

Also represented in the locality are Listed Buildings, defined as buildings of special architectural or historic interest in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Act states that “the planning authority, in determining any application for planning permission for development that affects a listed building or its setting, is required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving



Illus. 03: Site of Cultural Heritage importance in the vicinity of Rochester Village showing Scheduled and Listed sites (01-11) named in Section 3.2. and other sites of lesser importance keyed to Table 1 and Appendix 4 of the Rochester Village Atlas (The Archaeological Practice 2005).

the building, or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

With respect to ‘setting’, Section 66 of the Act states (in part):

“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting”.

The listing of structures by the Secretary of State denotes historical or architectural interest but does not necessarily include all buildings of significance or local importance. In addition to the Roman fort and two bastles within it [**SITES 6 & 7**, *Illus 03*], there are two Grade I listed structures - Birdhopecraig United Reformed Church [**SITE 8**, *Illus 03*] and a milestone [**SITE 9**, *Illus 03*] on the roadside immediately to the south of it - c 930 m west of the site and two others, Rochester Old Schoolhouse [**SITE 10**, *Illus 03*] and the adjacent war memorial [**SITE 11**, *Illus 03*] c. 660 m and 740 m, respectively, south-west of the site of interest.

Sites Appearing on the Northumberland Historic Environment Records (HER)

The Northumberland HER has been interrogated for entries within and in close proximity to the assessment area that may be impacted by proposed developments. The record comprises over 50 entries within a 0.50 km radius of the study area, some of which are Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings noted above, the remainder being structures of relatively modern origin. (see *Illus. 02 & 03*).

3.2.2 Primary documentary sources

No primary documents of significance to the present assessment were used in compiling the present report.

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 were consulted, and cited where relevant in the synthesis included in the full assessment report.

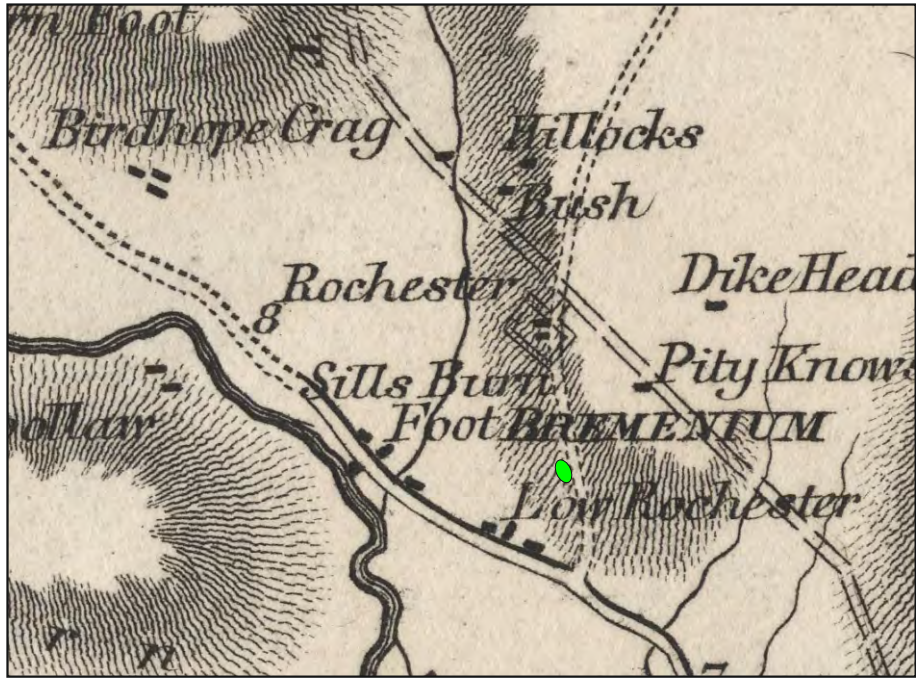
3.2.4 Historic Map Evidence (see *Illus. 04-08*)

The study of early maps provides invaluable evidence for the historical development of the area and the following were consulted in compiling the present report:

- Armstrong’s Plan of Northumberland, 1769
- Fryer’s Plan of Northumberland, 1820
- Greenwood’s Plan of Northumberland, 1828
- The Ordnance Survey Northumberland Series from c 1860 to the present.

3.2.6 Aerial Photographs

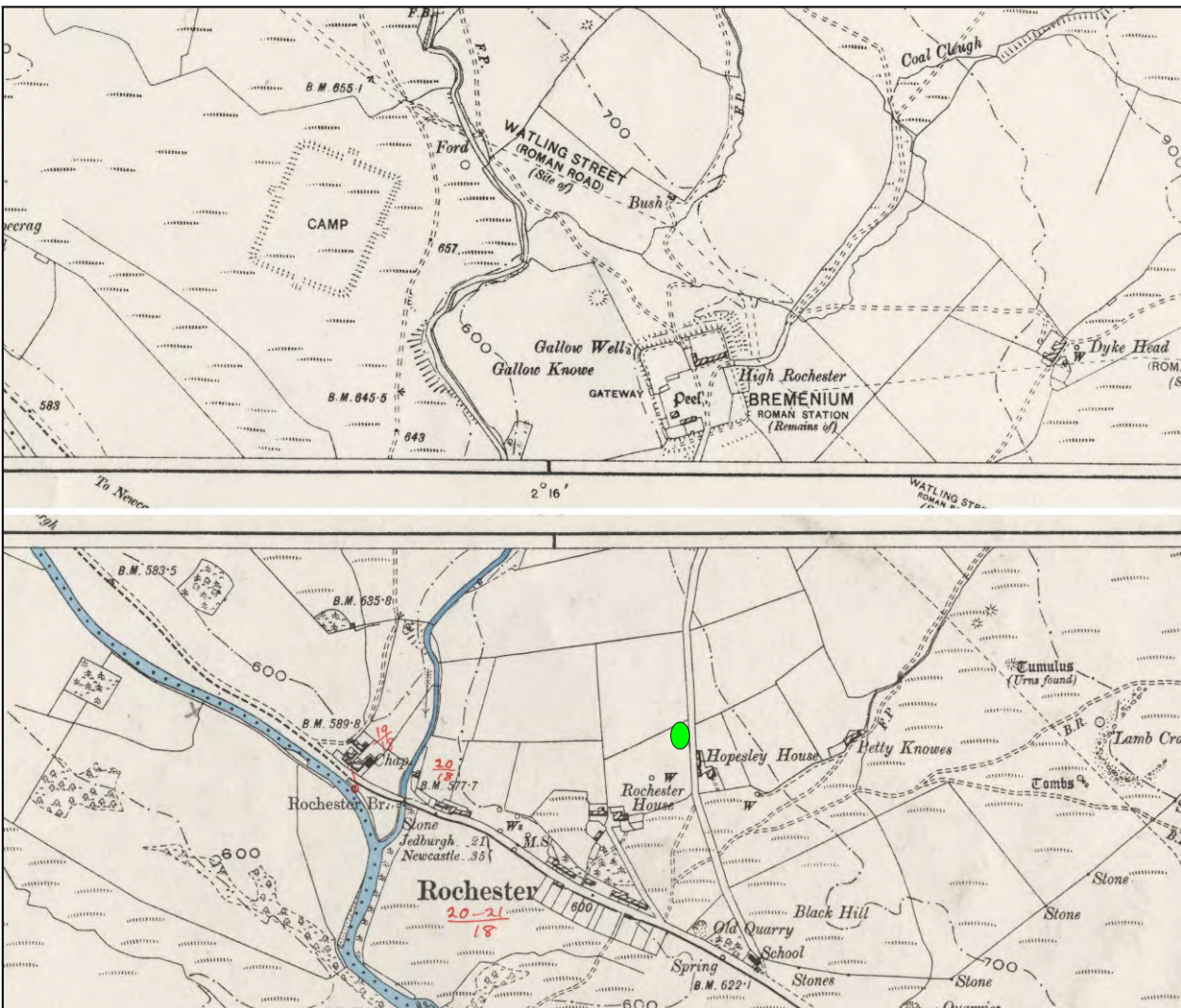
Aerial photographs covering the area provide information additional to that derived from other sources, particularly with regard to earthworks, although none of importance are noted within or closely adjacent to the current site of interest (see *Illus. 09*).



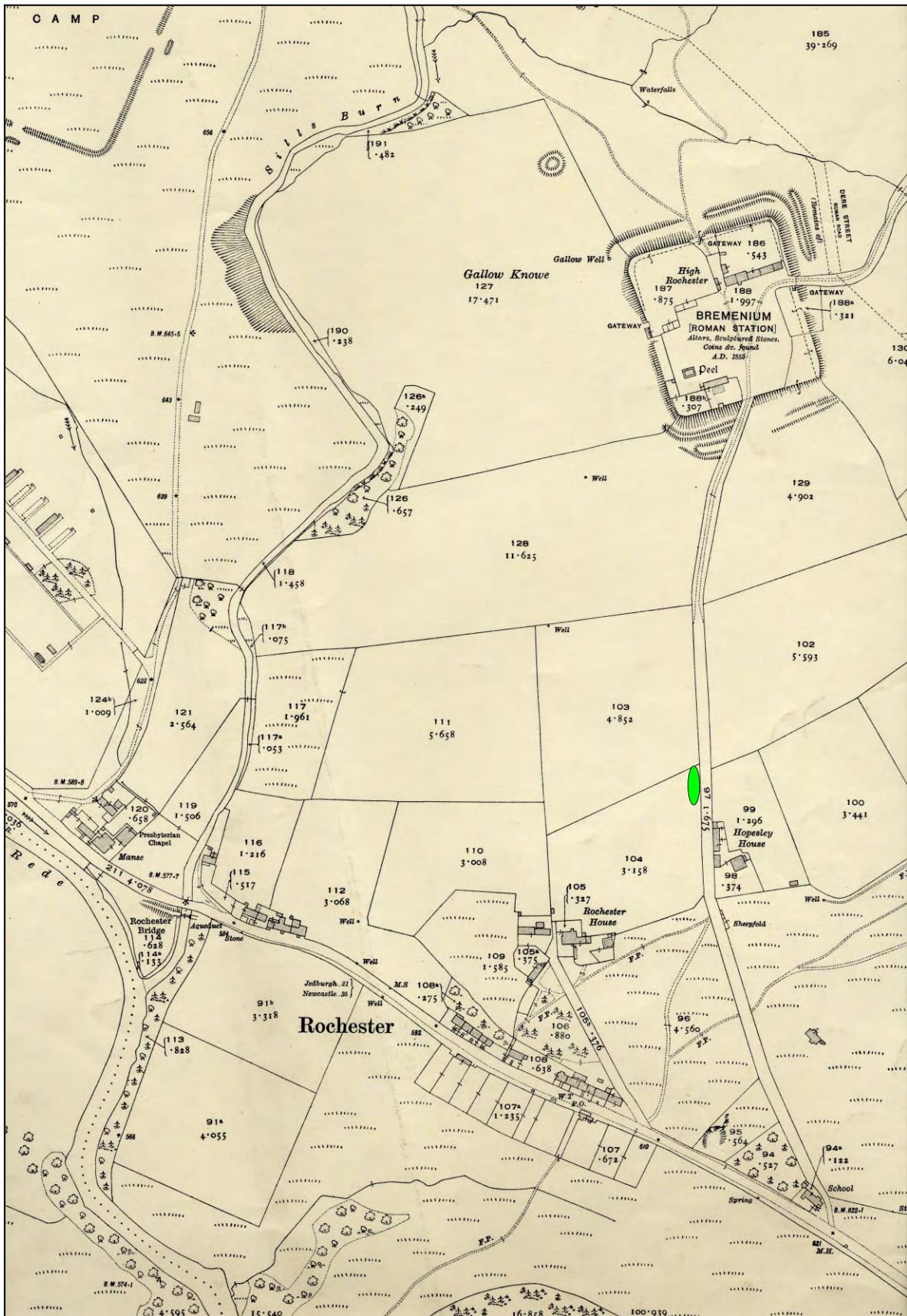
Illus. 04: Rochester, Low Rochester and Bremenium shown on Fryer's Map of 1820, with position of proposed development site marked in green



Illus. 05: Tithe Plan for the High Rochester/Low Rochester, Dec. 17th 1840, with position of proposed development site marked in green.



Illus. 06 & 07: First (above) and Second Edition Ordnance Survey Maps of Rochester, c 1860 & 1898 (6" scale), with site position shown in green.



Illus. 08: Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map of Rochester, 1920 (25" scale), showing the position of the proposed new build site in green.



Illus. 09: Aerial view of the site at the northern end of Ribbon development leading from Low Rochester up Bremenium Way towards the Roman fort at High Rochester, with a small pumping station to the north and rig & furrow in the grounds of Hopesley House visible to the east

3.2.7 Site Inspection and Local Information

A site visit was made by the author of this report in January 2022. The area was inspected closely and photographs taken of all features and structures of potential cultural heritage significance (see Appendix 1, *Photographs 01-15*), as well as general views showing the context of the site.

The site comprises a small, featureless enclosure of semi-improved grassland accessed by a field gate through the drystone wall which forms its eastern boundary with Bremenium Way. The site borders the side gardens of a row of modern houses on the west side of the road; drystone walls form the eastern part of this southern boundary, beyond which is a fenced boundary to the south-west corner of the plot. The southern boundary is also fenced and the northern boundary is formed by a well-constructed drystone wall of similar build to the eastern, roadside boundary. The western and northern boundaries separate the site from fields of open, semi-improved grassland which on the west side extends uninterrupted to a drystone boundary with the former Bremenium site, and to the north comprises the first of two large enclosed fields which occupy the area between the site and the Roman fort to the north. Also on the north side, almost abutting the north side of the drystone field boundary, is a small reservoir enclosed by a grassy mound with, on its south side, a 2 m high brick structure with flat, concrete roof. of brick and concrete construction with partially obscures views to the north from the site.

There are no obvious earthworks in the field, where the only monuments of any kind are a temporary, corrugated-iron construction - kee-house or similar - in the north-east corner adjacent to the double posts of the terminus of an overhead electricity supply with elevated pole-mounted electricity

substation transformer, the end post also attached to anchor wires rooted in the field several metres further south. Additional posts support cables into the brick building and along the road, crossing to another adjacent to the brick (reservoir) structure, creating an assemblage of six posts which partially obscure northward views from the proposed position of the new build towards the fort.

East of the site between Bremenium Way and the Scheduled Roman cemetery site, lies the 19th century steading, Hopesley House on the north side of which are remains of rig and furrow, probably of post-medieval origin. No additional sites of cultural heritage significance were identified within or adjacent to the proposed development site during these visits, but some additional observations were made with respect to other sites or landscapes of cultural heritage value, the setting of which could be impacted as a result of the proposed development.

4. SYNTHESIS

4.1 Prehistory

The upper reaches of the valley of the Rede would have provided early hunter-gatherer populations with both resources and a convenient route for seasonal migration from the coast to the uplands. Such communities in this Mesolithic - Middle Stone Age - period would have been small - essentially extended family groups - and foraged over very extensive areas. Following the introduction of farming c. 4000-3500 BC, more permanent settlement was possible, but evidence for Neolithic - New Stone Age - occupation and dwellings has proved elusive in this part of Northumberland. The long cairns on Dour Hill and Bellshiel Law, further up the valley, provide impressive and atmospheric relics of these early communities, however. The Three Kings, a four-poster burial monument located on the southern slopes of the valley above Low Byrness and Cottonshopeburnfoot, may be somewhat later in date, perhaps relating to the early-middle Bronze Age, but would have performed a similar function. Later cairnfield burial sites are also known in the uplands, notably on the Otterburn Ranges east and north-east of Otterburn. Amongst these, a possible bronze age settlement site has also been discovered recently on Fawdon Hill, beneath a cairn structure containing a number of cup-marked stones.

Although relatively few hillforts and palisaded hilltop enclosures, typical of the late Bronze Age and Iron Age, have been identified in this part of Redesdale, Fawdon Hill and Colwell Hill above Otterburn are examples of such sites. In the 1990s Crow suggested that an example of just such a defensible enclosure may site on the west side of High Rochester itself where geophysical survey indicated the presence of a sub-rectangular, double-banked enclosure extending as far as the break in the slope down to the Sills Burn.

By the late Iron Age, a widespread, dispersed settlement pattern of enclosed farmsteads was probably becoming established in the valley and this persisted throughout the succeeding Romano-British era (see below).

4.2 Romano-British Period

From the later 1st century AD, Redesdale along with the rest of the Northumbrian uplands fell under the control of expanding Roman empire. The principal bases of Roman power lay to the north west and south, at the forts of High Rochester (*Bremenium*) and Risingham (*Habitancum*) along Dere Street, the main road into Scotland. Another road was constructed to link High Rochester with Low Learchild (*Alauna*) on the Devil's Causeway, the route which led north from Corbridge towards Berwick-upon-Tweed.

The local rural population have left abundant traces of their presence in the shape of the rectilinear enclosed sites, which were characteristic form of settlement in Redesdale and North Tynedale during this period (see Jobey 1960). These settlements typically comprise a roughly squarish, rectangular or slightly trapezoidal enclosure, defined by a stone wall or a ditch and bank, pierced by a single causewayed entrance in the middle of the front wall. Just inside the enclosure, on either side of the entrance, a couple of yards or pens, probably intended to hold livestock, can generally be found. Several round houses usually lay towards the rear of the enclosure. The nearest such settlement to the current site of investigation is at Woolaw (NY 815 985), some 1.65 km north-west of Rochester. Three structural phases were identified in excavations there and the presence of a circular groove beneath

one of the stone round houses of phase II implies that here too the earliest houses were constructed of timber. The rectilinear settlements of the 'North Tynedale type' were largely restricted to the south or west side of the river in Redesdale, in marked contrast to their almost universal distribution in North Tynedale

High Rochester Roman Fort.

The Roman fort of *Bremenium* is situated on bluffs overlooking the Sills Burn to the west. The hamlet of High Rochester is enclosed within the fort circuit, and includes two bastles still used as dwellings and a couple of ruined cottages of uncertain date, as well as farm buildings and holiday cottages.

The Roman name of the site, *Bremenium*, signifies "the place on the roaring stream", presumably a reference to the Sills Burn in spate. *Bremenium* long played an important role as an outpost fort beside Dere Street, the easterly Roman route into Scotland, and had a large mixed garrison usually consisting of a milliary equitate cohort and a unit of scouts (*numerus exploratorum*). The base was occupied during Flavian period and from Antonine period onwards with rebuilding phases in the early 3rd century and at the beginning of the 4th century. Military withdrawal from the site seems to have taken place in the early 4th century, perhaps under Constantine (Casey & Savage 1980).

A civil settlement has not been identified but at least two phases of annexe has been identified attached to the west side of the fort. Excavations in the summer of 2021 targeted anomalies identified from new and previous geophysical surveys on the site. The discoveries included the remains of a well-preserved lime kiln, close to the west rampart of the fort, the remains of the north rampart of the annexe and possible gateway with external ditches together with traces of some internal structures.

The main mortuary zone lay to the south-east of High Rochester, where four tombs situated beside Dere Street 750 m from the fort were excavated in the middle of the last century and a large cemetery of small barrows was discovered c. 250 m north-west of the tombs, next to Petty Knowes farm, in 1975. Other smaller clusters of similar burials are dispersed in the neighbourhood and a second funerary zone may have lined Dere Street just north-east of the fort on the north bank of the Coal Cleugh.

There is no direct evidence that fort of High Rochester was occupied beyond the first or second decade of the 4th century, subsequent to which there is an almost complete dearth of evidence, archaeological, documentary and place-name concerning the subsequent history of Rochester,

4.3 Medieval settlement and tenure

Rochester lay beyond or on the very edge of the zone of permanent settlement and cultivation during the medieval era. It was situated within the liberty of Redesdale held by the Umfraville lineage, but does not feature in the various *inquisitiones post mortem* and legal documents relating to the Umfraville tenure of the liberty. Settlement did steadily advance up the valley during the climatic optimum lasting up until c. 1300, but does not seem to have reached Rochester. The possibility that the fort site was used as a Vaccarie and bercaries has been suggested but it not supported by the presence of medieval finds from excavations held on the site in the 1990s, in 2010 and in 2021.

4.4 Early Modern Resettlement

The earliest certain reference to a settlement at Rochester occurs in the schedule for the day and night watches of Redesdale, which is incorporated in the 1552 Border Survey conducted by John Dudley, earl of Northumberland, and Lord Dacre. Rochester appears on Saxton's map of 1576 and subsequently on

Speed's maps of 1611 and 1623. The settlement remained vulnerable to raiding, however, and in 1581 the inhabitants of Rochester lodged a complaint with the Queen's commission, against the Elliots of Liddesdale, declaring that the latter had raided the settlement on several occasions "taking 180 kye and oxen, gotes, sheep and household stuff, so that the town has laid waste for five years". Habitation gradually advanced, however, and Rochester had become less isolated by the start of the 17th century. It is around this time that the current two bastle houses were constructed within the former Roman fort.

4.5 Later history

The steady advance of permanent settlement beyond Rochester, to the very head of Redesdale, in the 17th and 18th centuries, may help to explain why the valley road gradually overshadowed and eventually supplanted Dere Street altogether. Greenwood's map of Northumberland suggests that the section of Dere Street between Rochester and Horsley was partially abandoned by 1827/1828. Neither MacLauchlan on his 1852 plan or the 1840 tithe commutation map (NRO: DT.164) and the 1866 enclosure award (NRO: QRA.44) record the course of Dere Street as a trackway or as a corridor of common passing through the 'ancient' enclosed lands, comparable to those leading south from the fort itself or north east. The gradual abandonment of the High Rochester-Horsley stretch of Dere Street need not have had any major impact on the route north of Rochester, however, as traffic could readily have used the track leading from High Rochester common green through the south gate towards Low Rochester. This was formally demarcated by the 1791 award which divided the hitherto unenclosed land south of the fort (cf. NRO 542.59), but was probably long-established by then.

While the original post-medieval settlement was at High Rochester, Low Rochester grew up in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries along the Turnpike road. The first buildings, perhaps of the seventeenth century, may have been centred around the bridge over the Sills Burn where there is evidence for cottages associated with a precursor to the current Presbyterian chapel at this time. It is likely that the school at the other end of the village was built under the orders of Lord Redesdale early in the nineteenth century. By 1886, trades directories indicate that the village was an important local centre containing the dwellings of a number of local trades people as well as the school and Presbyterian chapel. Although later construction in the twentieth century included the building of a number of houses along the road connecting the lower part of the village to High Rochester, decline had begun after the Second World War. The village school closed in 1953, the garage and the last shop in the 1990s and from this time there was no longer a resident Presbyterian Minister or a Vicar at Horsley.

5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL & IMPACTS

5.1 Archaeological Potential

Although located close to Scheduled sites of Bremenium Roman fort and Petty Knowes Roman cemetery, both just over 500 m north and east of the current sit, respectively, there is no indication that Roman military or civil settlement or associated activities extended into the current site of investigation. Nor is there any suggestion of high potential for finds or features associated with earlier periods to be present on the site, while later activity which probably only commenced at High Rochester in the 16th or 17th century is unlikely to include intensive occupation of this site, which is likely always to have been an area used for agricultural purposes. As such, any finds or features preserved there are likely to be of minor or local importance.

5.2 The survival of potential archaeological remains

It is not considered likely that any significant archaeological remains survive within the site boundary, but any that do so at depth are likely to be reasonably well-preserved due to the absence of major interventions in the modern period.

5.3 The Impact of the Development

Where groundworks are proposed, they would impact negatively on any archaeological structures or deposits surviving on the site.

As well as the direct impact upon any features or deposits surviving there, the visual impacts of the works in progress, and of the final build have been assessed (see below).

5.4 Visual Impacts (see *Appendix 1, Site Photographs 03, 06-09 & 11-15*)

In addition to the potential direct impact upon archaeological remains (or other kinds of heritage assets) of carrying out a development, the potential non-material impact of such a development must also be considered in terms of the effect it has upon the setting of a heritage asset, and the potential for a negative change in the visitor experience of the heritage asset through such a change to its setting. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF – *MHCLG* 2019) makes it clear that the significance of a heritage asset derives not only from its physical presence and historic fabric but also from its setting – the surroundings in which it is experienced, the extent of which is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve (HE 2017). Thus, 'Setting' embraces all of the surroundings from which the heritage asset can be experienced that can be experienced from or with the asset. However, it is a somewhat subjective and flexible concept, since it does not have a fixed boundary and cannot be definitively described as a spatially-bounded area or as comprising an area within a set distance of a heritage asset.

The importance of setting with regard to upstanding remains is perhaps easier to appreciate than those lacking such remains, since it is easier to engage in the rationale for the positioning of a standing building or upstanding defensible earthwork if it can be viewed within its wider landscape context. Heritage assets that comprise only buried remains may not be readily appreciated by a casual observer, but nonetheless retain a presence in the landscape and, like other heritage assets, have a setting which

enhances their significance as cultural heritage sites and their potential for appreciation by the observer (HE 2019).

Clearly, as noted above, consideration of setting is somewhat subjective and necessarily a matter of informed judgement, but Historic England has provided guidance to assist decision-making by ensuring it takes place within a clear framework and is as transparent and consistent as possible. In order to assess the implications of developments affecting setting, a systematic and staged approach to assessment is recommended, enabling all interested parties to understand whether the development proposal is in accordance with relevant planning policies. The following broad approach is recommended by Historic England (EH 2011ii):

- 1: identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
- 2: assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);
- 3: assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance;
- 4: explore ways of avoiding or minimising harm.

The area of assessment for a large or prominent development can often extend for a distance of several kilometres and should, as in this case, be guided by relevant planning control officers. While a proposed development may affect the setting of numerous heritage assets, it may not impact on them all equally, as some will be more sensitive to change affecting their setting than others. In the case of the current assessment, a 1 km radius from the site was identified within which it was considered that the setting of cultural heritage assets were most likely to be impacted, although it was not considered that all sites within this area would necessarily be impacted or, indeed, that no sites outside it would not be impacted. In order to carry out the first stage of the assessment identified above, a search of the county HER provided base-line information on heritage assets within 1 km of the proposed development site, while further map study and observation from the site itself indicated whether any sites outside the 1 km zone would be affected. The following summarises the results of this first stage of enquiry.

Amongst the sites potentially impacted, however, are a number of the highest designated cultural heritage value - Scheduled Monuments (and Grade I or Grade II* Listed Buildings, although none of these are present in this case) – including *Bremenium* Roman Fort, Petty Knowes Roman Cemetery and Sills Burn marching camps; the remainder being Grade II listed buildings and undesignated sites of significance listed on the HER. Although such sites are not in themselves significant enough from a cultural heritage perspective to warrant consideration of visual impact upon them, they each contribute collectively to a significant historic landscape.

It is assessed, with respect to visual impact, that views of and from a number of significant sites will be marginally impacted during and following the works period, but this impact is minimised by the distances to sites of importance and shielding caused by intervening monuments. Notably, *Bremenium* Roman fort is just over 500 m from the northern boundary of the site and is visible from it, but the reservoir and electricity supply posts between the site and High Rochester reduce any visual impact to marginal status. Furthermore, the background to the site, a row of buildings immediately to the south, mean that when viewed from *Bremenium* the proposed new build will blend somewhat into the existing background of brick-built buildings, as well as being partially obscured by the intervening reservoir and electricity supply poles. Since views to the east are obscured by topography and the farm of Hopesley House, the only other site of importance visible from the proposed new-build site is the Schedules Sills Burn marching camp site lying just over 1 km to the north-west. When viewed from there, however, by virtue of distance and the presence of existing buildings either side, the proposed new build will only be marginally detectible and no significant change to the landscape will be seen. Amongst Listed structures locally, only The Bastle within the former Roman fort area and the roof of the former Presbyterian

chapel at the west end of Low Rochester are visible from parts of the current site of interest, but neither will be significantly impacted by development there. With respect to the latter, its partial-intervisibility and distance from the site weigh against the notion of negative visual impact, while in the latter case the same arguments pertaining to the Roman fort apply.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Historical development

Although remains of early prehistoric occupation attest to occupation of the upper Rede valley in the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze ages, no remains are known from the current site or its environs. Later prehistoric occupation is attested, however, by the presence of occupation sites within 1.5 km of the site, with recent evidence suggesting that some of this overlapped with the Roman military settlement of the area from the later 1st century A.D. The Roman fort of *Bremenium* has left its mark in the form of the fort and attached western annexes some 500-700 m north of the current site, while a cemetery site lies a similar distance to the east and marching camps just over 1 km to the north-west. Subsequent to the Roman withdrawal, which may have occurred at High Rochester in the later 3rd century, continued, perhaps sporadic occupation can be assumed during the early and later medieval periods, although permanent settlement is not attested until the 16th century, following which the focus of settlement gradually moved from the area of the former Roman fort to a crossing of the Sills burn on what is now the main Rede Valley trunk road. The current site of proposed development is not known to have been exploited for anything other than agricultural purposes throughout these periods, although in the modern period electricity supply poles have been erected in its north-east corner, associated with a small reservoir and brick pump house immediately to the north.

6.2 Significance of known or potential archaeological remains

There are no known sites of cultural heritage significance within the site, but unknown finds or features potentially present in the area would likely be of minor or local importance.

Several sites of national, regional and local importance lie within visible range of the site and may be impacted by it.

6.3 The survival of potential archaeological remains

It is not considered likely that any archaeological remains survive within the site boundary, but any that do so will likely survive reasonably well since the ground does not appear to have been subject to intensive groundworks in the modern period.

6.4 The Impact of the Development

6.4.1 Direct Impacts

The proposed works will have negligible impact on any archaeological structures or deposits. It is unlikely that any features or finds of cultural heritage significance survive in the assessment area, although any existing are unlikely to be impacted by the works as proposed.

6.4.2 Visual Impacts

The visual presence of the development will have only negligible impacts on the settings of heritage assets in the wider vicinity, with the principal heritage assets affected being *Bremenium* Roman fort and The Bastle in its south-west corner.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that, should the development proceed, an archaeological Watching Brief be carried out during groundworks in order to mitigate the impacts of demolition by recording any previously unknown archaeological remains, including unstratified artifacts, as they appear.

APPENDIX 1: Site Photographs



Photo. 01



Photo. 02



Photo. 03



Photo. 04



Photo. 05



Photo. 06



Photo. 07



Photo. 08



Photo. 09



Photo. 010



Photo. 11



Photo. 12



Photo. 13



Photo. 14



Photo. 15

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