



# **OLD CARLISLE WIGTON**

Cumbria

## **Archaeological Recording**



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The fieldwork was undertaken by Ian Miller and Gunnar Hellström, the finds were examined by Sean McPhillips, and the report was compiled by Ian Miller and edited by Jamie Quartermaine and Rachel Newman. The project was managed by Jamie Quartermaine.

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## SUMMARY

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A programme of archaeological recording was carried out by Oxford Archaeology North (OA North), on behalf of English Heritage, at Old Carlisle, Wigton, Cumbria (NY 2614 4614), during June 2002. The work was required to provide a mitigation record of the archaeological features that had been exposed during the topsoil strip in advance of the construction of a yard for the adjacent farm. In order to minimise disturbance to the archaeological features, they were subject to a light cleaning and detailed planning, with a specific requirement that the work should not excavate deeper than the exposed surface.

The site lies *c*116m east of the Roman fort at Old Carlisle, and is within the area of the Scheduled Monument (SM CU8). Despite its position behind the line of Hadrian's Wall, the fort is clearly an integral component of the Hadrianic Frontier system; it is situated on the Roman road linking Carlisle to Papcastle, perhaps to protect the south flank of the Solway Plain. The associated extramural settlement is particularly intriguing, not least for being the only one to have produced epigraphic evidence for a 'village' council. Very little is known, however, about the chronological development of the settlement, reflecting the very limited amount of archaeological excavation undertaken there.

A maximum depth of 0.3m of topsoil/ploughsoil, across an area measuring *c*18m by 14m, had been stripped by the landowner. The archaeological cleaning of the exposed surface subsequently revealed a suite of Roman remains, including a well-preserved section of the road that led out from the east gate of the fort, and evidence of at least one substantial building, providing important new evidence of the nature, character, and extent of the extramural settlement at Old Carlisle.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was invited by English Heritage to submit a project design for a programme of archaeological recording following a topsoil strip for a farm development at Old Carlisle, Wigton, Cumbria (NY 2614 4614; Fig 1). The site formed part of the extramural settlement of the Roman fort, and lies within the area designated as a Scheduled Monument (CU 8). An area, measuring c18m by 14m, had been subject to a topsoil strip, without archaeological supervision, in the course of the development, during which it became apparent that archaeological features were exposed. English Heritage therefore requested that a programme of archaeological recording be undertaken to clean and record these features. The project was funded by English Heritage.
- 1.1.2 The fieldwork was carried out by OA North in June 2002, and this report sets out the results of the work in conjunction with a method statement, and assesses the data generated within a local and regional context.

### 1.2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 1.2.1 Old Carlisle Farm (NY 2614 4614) is situated 2km to the south of Wigton, and some 15km south-west of Carlisle, Cumbria. The site lies some 116m to the east of the Roman fort at Old Carlisle, within the area of the extramural settlement, at a height of c60m OD.
- 1.2.2 Old Carlisle lies on the southern edge of the broad, lowland plain of the Solway Basin, which is fringed by the relatively remote coastline of the Solway Firth. The Solway Basin is underlain mainly by mudstones and sandstones of Permo-Triassic age ('New Red Sandstone') which, to the west of Carlisle, are overlain by mudstones and limestones of Jurassic age (Countryside Commission 1998, 20). Erosion of the comparatively weak Permo-Triassic and Jurassic rocks had already reduced much of the Solway Basin to an area of low relief prior to the onset of the last glaciation, when thick ice-sheets crossed the area from Scotland and the Lake District, resulting in further erosion and the deposition of boulder clay (*op cit*, 21).

### 1.3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.3.1 The Roman fort and associated settlement at Old Carlisle are amongst the most intriguing sites on the Roman Frontier, not least due to the limited amount of archaeological investigation undertaken there. Whilst the foundation date for the fort remains uncertain, it was clearly an integral component of the network of forts constructed throughout Cumberland as a support for the western flank of the Wall, and is therefore clearly an element in the Hadrianic frontier-scheme (Collingwood 1928, 104). This does not rule out the possibility that a fort existed at Old Carlisle prior to Hadrian's reorganisation of the Frontier, as there are numerous examples of forts of the Hadrianic network using sites that dated back to the Trajanic and Flavian periods (*op cit*, 106). It is, nevertheless, likely that the existing ramparts and general plan are Hadrianic; the size and dimensions of the fort at Old Carlisle

suggest that it is one of the Hadrianic series of cavalry forts (Birley 1951, 33), and it compares closely with the Hadrianic Benwell and Chesters forts. Epigraphic evidence has confirmed that the fort was indeed occupied by a cavalry unit (the *ala Augusta Gallorum Proculeiana*), which, as Birley points out (*op cit*, 30), was the only cavalry unit on the western flank of Hadrian's Wall. The position of Old Carlisle relative to the network of roads led Ferguson (1890) to propose that the fort was a strategic centre for the region, and Haverfield similarly considered Old Carlisle to have played a key role in the defence strategy of the region, and proposed it to be '*among the most important Roman forts in north-western Cumberland*' (1920, 146).

- 1.3.2 Of the associated settlement, Birley concluded that it was '*in many ways far more interesting, and deserving of investigation by the spade, than the fort itself. For one thing, it seems to have occupied as wide a tract as any such settlement in our area*' (1951, 34). Aerial photography of the site taken by JK St Joseph in the summer of 1949 showed clear outlines of rectangular buildings along both sides of the main Roman road to the south of the fort, and along the approach road to the east gate (Plate 1) (Margary 1973). A further programme of aerial photography, undertaken some 25 years later (Higham and Jones 1975), adopted a system of block-flying, in preference to linear flying, in order to gain an understanding of the wider landscape around the Roman fort. This indicated that the extramural settlement covered c5.8 hectares, and incorporated buildings that extended for at least 0.5km along the main road to the south. Detailed analysis and transcription of the aerial photographs provided a clear picture of the main buildings within and around the fort (Fig 2), and showed that the axis formed by the line of the Roman road, from Carlisle to Papcastle, formed the principal street of the extramural settlement (*op cit*, 24). Bidwell suggested that the apparent regularity of the settlement plan indicated that it had been laid out by the army (1997, 74), whilst Higham and Jones (1975) argue that the principal alignments of the settlement were based upon the Carlisle to Papcastle road and the road issuing from the east gate of the fort.
- 1.3.3 In addition to the Carlisle to Papcastle road, and its branch road leading to the east gate of the fort, Bellhouse traced a north-bound road '*from the east gate as far as the new secondary modern school, a straight length of just over one mile, pointing uncompromisingly towards Drumburgh*' (1956, 42). Bellhouse also postulated a south-bound road from Old Carlisle, via Broadfield, to Old Penrith, but conceded that '*in both cases much fieldwork is still needed before these roads can be accepted as certain*' (*ibid*). Some evidence for the north-bound road was furnished by a limited programme of archaeological investigation in 1998/9 by the Carlisle Archaeological Unit (CAU), which focused on the area c1.5km to the north of the fort. This work revealed a series of boundary ditches of Roman date, and included the retrieval of fourth century pottery (CAU 1999). Whilst being far from conclusive, this work provided tentative evidence of extramural settlement at a distance in excess of 1km beyond the north gate of the fort.
- 1.3.4 In addition to its apparently large size, the extramural settlement at Old Carlisle '*is the only one to have produced epigraphic evidence for the existence of a village council*' (Birley 1951, 34); an altar dedicated to Juppiter Optimus Maximus and Vulcan for the health of the emperor Gordian (AD 238-44), was '*set up by the*

*village authorities from money contributed by the villagers*' (translation in Collingwood 1928, 116).

- 1.3.5 In terms of the wider landscape, Higham and Jones identified several acres of divisions within the fields to the south of the fort and settlement at Old Carlisle. '*Fields somewhat less than one acre in size proliferate ... in an agglomeration of rectangular boxes that at last give us some impression of the reality of Roman agriculture close to a fort*' (1975, 25). They further identified numerous 'native-style' settlements in the vicinity, as at Jenkin's Cross and Sandy Brow to the east, and concluded that '*the Old Carlisle fort accumulated a number of sites to create a rather denser infilling on the location map than is normally the case in this area*' (*ibid*). Higham and Jones concluded that these settlements were attracted '*by the economic forces created by the Roman road and its attendant fort*' (*op cit*, 26).
- 1.3.6 Archaeological excavation within the extramural settlement at Old Carlisle is limited to that undertaken in 1956 by RL Bellhouse, which focused on part of the settlement to the south of the fort (Bellhouse 1959). This excavation revealed a sequence of buildings, which included '*substantial stone ones with flagged floors and stone and slate roofs*' and '*wattle-and-daub houses with clay floors*' (*op cit*, 23). Analysis of the pottery retrieved from this excavation indicated that part of the settlement was occupied during the second and third centuries AD. Bellhouse did not offer any interpretation of the function of these buildings, but did note the frequent occurrence of burnt clay nodules and abundant charcoal.
- 1.3.7 The date at which the Roman Army abandoned Old Carlisle is uncertain. The fort is mentioned in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, an official document containing a list of army units, which has been dated to cAD 410, although is thought to have been based on earlier sources (Shotter 1993, 106). This suggests that a Roman garrison was still maintained at Old Carlisle during the closing stages of the fourth century. Significantly, there is some evidence, albeit slight, for continued occupation during the post-Roman period. The *Historia Brittonum*, written in the early ninth century and attributed to Nennius, refers to the castle, which Vortigern built for himself at *Guasmoric* near Carlisle as, '*a city which in English is called Palmcastre*' (Birley 1951, 17). An inquest of 1305 includes Palmcastre among a group of enclosures in the King's forest, all of which are identified as places in the western part of the parish of Westward, whilst a survey of the same area, dated 1578, mentions '*Old Carliell at Palmcastle*' (*ibid*). Using this evidence, Collingwood (1928, 111) raised the possibility that the settlement at Old Carlisle may thus have been the capital of a British chief or king in the time of Vortigern, or else the same settlement was still inhabited and had become the local centre of British survival when the Northumbrians arrived in the seventh century.
- 1.3.8 One of the earliest eyewitness accounts of Old Carlisle was provided by Camden, who visited the area during his northern tour in 1599, and described the site as the '*pitifull reliques of an ancient citie [sic]*' (Camden 1610). A more detailed account was compiled in 1725 by William Stukeley, who described the remains as '*the fairest show of foundations I ever yet saw: one might almost draw an intire [sic] plan of it, and of every dwelling*' (1776, 54). Similarly, Horsley remarked that '*the ruins of the old Roman town and station here are very grand and conspicuous...*' (1732, 112). In the years subsequent to, but also likely to have begun before, Horsley's remarks, the fort and associated structures provided an ideal source of

building materials for houses and boundary walls in the locality. Hutchinson (1776, 230), for instance, noted that *'the church of Wigton, and many of the buildings in that town, have been erected out of the ruins [of Old Carlisle]'*. In their volume on Cumberland, published in 1816, the Lyson brothers remarked that *'in the year 1811 a considerable portion of the wall on the east side of the station was laid open for the purpose of obtaining ready hewn stone for some buildings on the adjoining farm'* (quoted in Birley 1951, 26). Birley suggests that *'the drastic stone-robbing of 1811 had been a consequence of the passing in that year of an enclosure act, which eliminated the last surviving common lands in the parish of Westward, and made it necessary to provide field-walls to mark the boundaries of different properties'* (*ibid.*).

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## 2. METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

- 2.1.1 A project design (*Appendix 1*) was submitted by OA North, in response to a verbal request from Caron Newman of English Heritage, for a programme of archaeological recording of the features exposed in the course of the topsoil strip in advance of the proposed development. The project design allowed for the light cleaning of the exposed surface, and the detailed planning of any archaeological features. In order to minimise disturbance to the archaeology of the area, there was a specific requirement that the archaeological works should not excavate deeper than the exposed surface. The project design was submitted in May 2002 and, following its formal acceptance by English Heritage, the fieldwork was undertaken during June 2002.

### 2.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

- 2.2.1 An area measuring c18m by 14m had been stripped of topsoil/ploughsoil by the landowner in May 2002, revealing a suite of archaeological deposits. The subsequent programme of archaeological work involved the cleaning of the exposed surface, using exclusively manual techniques, and the detailed recording of the visible deposits and features. Recording comprised a full description and accurate location of all features and deposits encountered. A photographic record was also maintained, comprising monochrome prints, colour slides, and digital format.
- 2.2.3 The recording methods employed by OA North accord with those recommended by English Heritage's Centre for Archaeology (CfA). Recording was in the form of *pro forma* Context Sheets for each of the discrete features and deposits identified, together with an accompanying plan. The surface features were surveyed by EDM tacheometry using a total station linked to a pen computer data logger, the accuracy of detail generation being appropriate for a 1:250 output. The survey was enhanced by manual survey on site using AutoCAD 14 within the pen computer. The position of the excavation was located with respect to surrounding landscape features, and was also recorded using the total station.
- 2.2.4 All finds recovered during the course of the project were bagged and recorded by context. Artefactual material was processed in accordance with OA North standard practice, which follows current IFA guidelines. An outline catalogue has been prepared and is included as *Appendix 3*.

### 2.3 ARCHIVE

- 2.3.1 A full archive of the archaeological investigation has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project, including processing and analysis of any features and finds recovered during fieldwork, in

accordance with UKIC guidelines (Walker 1990). The paper and material archive will be deposited with the Tullie House Museum in Carlisle. In addition, a copy of the report will be forwarded to the Cumbria Sites and Monuments Record.



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### 3. RESULTS

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#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1.1 The following is a description of the archaeological deposits and features encountered during the fieldwork; a summary list of contexts is presented in *Appendix 2*. The uppermost deposits had been removed by mechanical excavator prior to the commencement of the current project. An examination of the vertical section confirmed that these deposits comprised topsoil and ploughsoil up to 0.3m deep. The topsoil strip was undertaken without archaeological supervision, although it would appear that the removal of these layers had been undertaken with care and with little disturbance to the underlying stratigraphy.
- 3.1.2 It is understood that on completion of the archaeological investigation, the exposed remains are to be sealed beneath a protective sheet of terram, and buried beneath hard-core.

#### 3.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.2.1 **Road:** the dominant feature exposed during the course of the project was a substantial and well-preserved metalled surface, **03**, which crossed the site from east to west, and had a maximum width of 5.2m (Fig 3). It comprised c10% medium-sized sub-rounded stones and c80% small rounded stones, gravel, and peagriffs rammed into an orange-brown, coarse sand matrix, forming a coherent metalled surface (Plate 3). The metalling was particularly well-preserved across the eastern part of the exposed area, whilst the upper surface, across the western part, appeared to have sustained slight disturbance, probably by ploughing. The characteristics and alignment of the surface, **03**, indicate that it was the Roman road leading out from the east gate of the fort, as may be seen clearly from aerial photographs (Plate 1).
- 3.2.2 The surface of **03** was at a slightly higher level than the adjacent deposit to the north, **09**, indicating that it was constructed upon an embankment, or *agger*. The northern edge of the road, **03**, was well-defined, and incorporated a gentle camber between the edge and the crown of the surface. The southern extent of the road, however, was not defined clearly as it was partially masked by overlying deposits, particularly a rubble spread, **06** (Section 3.2.12).
- 3.2.3 Three, large sub-rectangular stones, **11**, were revealed towards the eastern end of the exposed section of road (Fig 3). These appeared to be *in situ*, and had seemingly been carefully placed at regular intervals of c0.6m across the width of the road. Their purpose remains unclear, although one interpretation may be that they represent a junction between working parties during the road's construction. A second series of large, sub-rectangular stones, **12**, was noted aligned east/west along the length of the road. These were situated in the approximate middle of the road, **03**, perhaps marking its centre.
- 3.2.4 An examination of the vertical section along the eastern edge of the exposed area revealed that the upper surface of road **03** lay at a maximum depth of 0.3m below

the modern ground surface, although this decreased to a depth of 0.2m at the western edge.

- 3.2.5 Situated along the northern edge of the road, **03**, and stratigraphically of a later date, was an homogeneous, mid-brown silty-sand, **09**, which contained c60% stones of all sizes and configurations (Fig 3). Some of these stones appeared to have worked faces, suggesting that they were ashlar from a demolished structure, although there was no surviving evidence of any such building at the depth excavated.
- 3.2.6 **Structures:** firm evidence of stone structures was revealed within the southern part of the exposed area (Fig 4). Situated in the south-eastern corner of the site, and continuing beyond the area exposed, was a structure, **04**, comprising an alignment of four very large worked stones, **13**, parallel, but c2.3m to the south, of the road, **03** (Plate 4). These stones appeared to have been deliberately laid, forming a substantial wall. The largest of the component stones was 0.92m long, and in excess of 0.66m wide. Interestingly, one of the stones was of a yellow sandstone that does not occur locally and was likely to have been imported to the site. The tops of the stones were at a similar level to the upper surface of road **03** and, as there was no indication of a foundation cut, it may be suggested that further courses of masonry exist below the exposed stones.
- 3.2.7 Situated 2.7m to the west of wall **13**, a north/south aligned wall, **14**, was exposed. This similarly incorporated large freestone blocks, but of smaller dimensions to those forming wall **13** (Plate 5). The ashlar appeared to have been used to form the internal and external faces, which enclosed a central core of rubble, forming a wall 0.6m thick. Occasional traces of clay within the rubble core may have represented the vestiges of a bonding material, although this could not be confirmed without further excavation. The 2.7m wide gap between the north/south and east/west walls contained displaced masonry, fragments of slate, and traces of a fine metalling, perhaps representing an entrance to the structure.
- 3.2.8 Immediately adjacent to wall **13** was a large, worked sandstone slab, **05**, which measured 1.77m long and was aligned east/west (Plate 6). The straight sides and chamfered edges of this stone indicate that it had been carefully worked. It appeared to have been carefully laid, perhaps as a component of structure **04**. Limited excavation revealed that a further course of masonry underlay slab **05**, although its precise relationship with structure **04** could not be confirmed without further excavation.
- 3.2.9 Further structural evidence was provided by a linear spread of closely-packed stones, 1.05m wide, set in a matrix of compacted orange sandy-clay (**08**), which was revealed 0.88m to the west of structure **04** (Fig 3). This was also aligned parallel to road **03** (Plate 7), and appeared to represent the foundations of a small building. A series of regularly-spaced iron nails was discovered along the upper surface of **08**, suggesting that it may have supported a timber superstructure. The clay and cobble foundation was traced for a distance of 4.4m, and north/south aligned returns were noted at each end, which continued beyond the southern edge of the site (Fig 4).
- 3.2.10 Foundation **08** enclosed to the south a spread of closely-packed, medium-sized rounded stones set into a sandy-clay matrix, **10**. These appeared to form a cobbled surface, possibly a floor internal to structure **08**. The surface was overlain by

tumbled building material, which included fragments of slate. Several of these fragments contained peg holes, indicating that they had been used as roofing material.

- 3.2.11 Between structures **04** and **08** was a deposit of mid-orange brown silty-sand, **07**, which incorporated occasional pea-grits and sparse charcoal flecking. This deposit appeared to butt the western wall of structure **04**, thereby post-dating its construction.
- 3.2.12 Across the western part of the site was a wide spread of closely-packed stones, **06**, which comprised stones of all sizes and configurations, including fragments of sandstone ashlar (Fig 3). The majority of these stones appeared to have been deposited randomly, and possibly represented the material discarded from stone robbing. Two small groups of stones did, however, give some impression of having been deliberately laid, suggesting that they may be *in situ* structural remains (shown in bold on Figure 3); however, this could not be confirmed without further excavation. The greatest density of stones within this spread occurred across its western part (Fig 3), the density of stones decreasing towards the south-west corner of the site, with a corresponding increase in the proportion of coarse sandy-clay soil matrix. In places, this deposit was of a loose consistency, forming 'soft spots', which occurred in conjunction with a concentration of flat slabs of sandstone, many of which displayed indications of burning on one side, **15**.
- 3.2.13 Many of the deposits and features described above appear to have been overlain by a patchy and mixed layer of very dark brown, coarse sandy-clay, **02**. Layer **02** was the uppermost deposit across the exposed area, and its patchy occurrence is likely to have been the result of its partial removal during machine stripping. Where it survived intact, such as in the south-west corner of the area, it had a maximum depth of 0.05m. This contained occasional stones, degraded fragments of brick, slate, charcoal flecking, and three fragments of post-medieval pottery.
- 3.2.14 The topsoil/ploughsoil, **01**, had been removed by mechanical excavator prior to an archaeological presence on the site, but was recorded in the vertical section edges. It comprised an homogeneous dark brown, fine sandy-clay that contained occasional small rounded and sub-rounded stones, and had a maximum depth of 0.3m across the eastern part of the site, but this reduced to 0.2m across the western part. No clear interface between a topsoil and ploughsoil horizon could be discerned in the vertical sections of the exposed area, suggesting that it may have been subject to ploughing in recent times; traces of ridge and furrow across the study area may be seen on aerial photographs (Higham and Jones 1975).

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## 4. THE FINDS

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 A moderate assemblage of material was retrieved during the course of the project, 192 fragments in all. In general, the material was in poor condition, and many fragments were clearly quite abraded, having been recovered from essentially disturbed deposits. Nonetheless, it seems likely that little of the material will have moved far from its original place of deposition, and that disturbance is relatively recent. The vast majority was of Roman date, and comprised a range of material categories, including pottery vessels, glass, ceramic building material, iron, and copper alloy objects, suggesting a level of wealth on the site. A summary finds catalogue is included as *Appendix 3*.

### 4.2 POTTERY

- 4.2.1 The pottery assemblage consisted of 121 sherds. The bulk of the material was retrieved from unstratified contexts, which included that collected from the spoil heap generated during the topsoil strip and from the general clearance layer. Some of the earlier material is abraded, and many of the later sherds also show some surface erosion. Breaks were not, however, unduly worn, suggesting that there had not been an undue amount of disturbance prior to this project.
- 4.2.2 The coarsewares comprised 48 fragments of probably locally made oxidised wares, at least some which are likely to have been produced at the Scalesceugh kilns, south of Carlisle (McCarthy 1990), 13 fragments of reduced greywares of unknown origin (but again likely to be of local manufacture), and 19 sherds of Black Burnished Ware Category 1.
- 4.2.3 The finewares included six small fragments of colour-coated finewares, probably Nene Valley products, and 18 sherds of samian, mainly Central Gaulish in origin. The remaining fabrics identified include Dressel 20 Spanish amphora (16 sherds), and two fragments of mortarium (producers not identified). The range of fabrics and vessels present suggests a date range centred in the second century AD, and possibly stretching into the third.
- 4.2.4 The majority of the assemblage was locally produced, indicating that pottery was in easy local supply by the second century. However, the presence of relatively large amounts of Black Burnished Ware and samian, along with amphora, also suggests quite strongly, and not surprisingly, that the site was able to access the military supply network, at least during the second century, and probably into the third. The presence of a small amount of Severn Valley ware, a predominantly second and third century product, thought to have been reaching Hadrian's Wall by the 120s (Webster 1978), again suggests access to military sources of supply.
- 4.2.5 The pottery is summarised as follows:

□

□

Fabric Group	Category	Period	Unstrat	Structure 04	Structure 08	Floor 10
Coarse / □ finewares	Black Burnished Ware 1	Second century or later	19	1		
	Oxidised Ware	Second century	48	2		
	Reduced Ware	Second century?	13			
	Severn Valley	Second / Third century	1			1
	Nene Valley	Second / Third century	2	1		
Mortaria		Second century		1		
Amphorae		First – Third century	11	1	1	
Samian		Second century	15	3		1
<i>Totals</i>			<i>109</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>

### 4.3 CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL

- 4.3.1 Two pieces of tile were collected, one probably *tegula*-type roof tile. As the fragments were small they add little to interpretation of the site.

### 4.4 METALWORK

- 4.4.1 A badly corroded silver coin (1014), found within upper clearance layer **01**, is probably a second century *denarius*. The copper alloy ring fitting (1003), recovered from **10**, probably derived from a horse harness.
- 4.4.2 In all, 44 iron objects were collected; of these 40 were nails, many of which were complete, if badly corroded. Many of the complete examples were associated with structure **08**. There was also a 'D'-shaped buckle with a broken pin (1007) from structure **04**, a wedge-shaped object from layer **07** (1010), a masonry spike (1008) and an unidentifiable object, both from structure **08**.

#### **4.5 GLASS**

- 4.5.1 Seven fragments of glass were collected from clearance layer **01**, representing two blue/green thin walled vessels, a small hexagonal mould-blown storage bottle, which dates to the late second century (Price and Cottam 1998), and three rim fragments probably from a small flask. The other fragments consist of two small pitted pieces of blue and frosted window glass (presumably modern).

#### **4.6 STONE**

- 4.6.1 Eleven pieces of sandstone and slate roof tiles were recovered from the clearance layer, **01**, and from structure **08**. Several fragments are heavily burnt, indicating that they have been subjected to intense heat. One large fragment of Borrowdale Volcanic Slate had a peg hole on its edge, similar to that described by RL Bellhouse in his account of the Old Carlisle excavations in 1956 (Bellhouse 1959).

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## 5. DISCUSSION

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### 5.1 THE SITE

- 5.1.1 The development at Old Carlisle Farm has provided an extremely valuable opportunity to examine the nature, character, and integrity of the Roman extramural settlement beyond the east gate of the fort. The programme of archaeological recording has demonstrated an *in situ* presence of Roman structures, with a potential for further remains to exist at a lower level.
- 5.1.2 The exposed remains are undoubtedly of some significance, in both local and regional terms. The colossal stones in **04** are particularly tantalising, as they appear to represent the remains of a substantial structure, perhaps indicating a public building on the site. Similarly, the apparent use of slate, rather than thatch, as a roofing material suggests an element of wealth, particularly as the Borrowdale volcanic rock implies a central Lakeland origin, and will thus have been brought from some distance.
- 5.1.3 The merging of the site plan generated during the present study with the aerial photographs of Higham and Jones (1975) has shown a correlation between structure **04** and a large building, seen on the latter, which appeared to measure c12m square (Fig 2). It is interesting to note that, whilst it was not possible to discern any adjacent buildings from the aerial photography (Fig 2), the present study has clearly demonstrated structural remains to the west.
- 5.1.4 Clay and cobble foundation **08** has been recorded as a separate feature to structure **04** as there was no direct link between the two, and they had very different construction techniques. It is nevertheless possible that these two structural components were part of the same building, the bulk of which lies to the south, beyond the recorded area.
- 5.1.5 The substantial stone building at Old Carlisle is particularly interesting, as only a limited number of comparable buildings have yet been identified from other extramural settlements in the North West. Perhaps the best parallel, however, is from the excavations of the extramural settlement at Papcastle, where the foundations of a large stone public building were identified, comprising large blocks of quite well-dressed masonry, set on a large platform of dumped clay (Olivier *et al* 1990). The building included an altar base and a figurine of Marsyas was found within it, which would imply a high status for the building, such as a *mansio* or a temple. On the present evidence, however, it is not possible to conjecture as to the function of the Old Carlisle building.
- 5.1.6 The presence of the worked stone slab, **05**, is intriguing. Its overall size and carefully worked edges suggest that it may have been intended as a piece of monumental masonry, perhaps intended to bear an inscription, or as a milestone. However, within the remit of the present project, it was not possible to lift the stone and examine the reverse face; it is worth noting that a large collection of inscribed stones (26 in total) has been retrieved previously from Old Carlisle, the details of which are presented by Collingwood (1928, 112-9). Milestones, re-used as building material, have been found elsewhere in Roman Britain such as at Rockbourne in Hampshire, and an inscription dedicated to Carinus of 282-3 (Collingwood and

Wright 1965), discovered at Clanville, also in Hampshire, may either be another re-used milestone or indicate imperial ownership (de la Bedoyere 2001, 123); such interpretations of stone **05**, however, can only be confirmed by examination of its underside.

- 5.1.7 The stone spread, **06**, is also likely to represent the remains of a stone structure, and may potentially originate from the discarding of material during large-scale stone-robbing during the post-medieval period. The incorporated 'soft spots', with associated burnt stone slabs, are particularly intriguing. The 'soft spots' may indicate a below ground structure, such as a cellar, although again this could not be characterised without further excavation.
- 5.1.8 The road, **03**, appears clearly on aerial photographs of the site (Plate 1) as a branch from the main road, which takes a course just south of both the farm and the fort. This main road was that from Carlisle to Papcastle, which probably extended down the coast to Ravenglass (Margary 1973, 126-8). The branch road, **03**, leads directly out from the east gate of the fort, and will have formed its main access. This is reflected in the width of **03**, which was seen to measure up to 5.2m across, and was built on an embankment, or *agger*. Margary (1973, 15) considers a width of 30ft (9.15m) to have been the maximum size of important Roman roads, '*and on lesser roads a width of 15-18ft (4.57-5.49m) is very common*'. The use of an *agger* was intended to provide a well-drained base, essential for the maintenance of a firm road structure. The material for the *agger* was frequently derived from the excavation of a broad ditch along one or both sides of the road. These ditches often became silted up during the Roman period, as at Walton-le-Dale (Gibbons *et al* forthcoming), or subsequently, leaving no surface indication of their presence. It was impossible to confirm the presence of roadside ditches during the course of the project, although there was sufficient space for a ditch between the southern edge of the road, **03**, and structures **04** and **08** to the south.
- 5.1.9 The fieldwork did not reveal any deposits that could be ascribed to the medieval period, and no artefacts of that date are contained within the finds assemblage. The coarse sandy-clay deposit, **02**, however, is likely to represent activity in the post-medieval period. Its mixed nature and ephemeral occurrence across the exposed area suggested that it may represent trampled material, perhaps originating from the widespread stone-robbing of the site.



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## 6. ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL

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### 6.1 POTENTIAL

- 6.1.1 The programme of archaeological recording at Old Carlisle has established the character and integrity of the archaeological remains beyond the east gate of the fort. It has shown that significant stone structural remains survive intact, with a considerable potential for additional remains at a lower depth. The upper surface of *in situ* Roman remains, represented by a well-preserved section of Roman road, lies at a minimum depth of 0.2m below the modern ground surface.
- 6.1.2 The nature and function of Roman extramural settlements in the north of England have recently been a topic of much debate (T.Wilmott pers comm), and the remains exposed at Old Carlisle Farm have the potential to inform further discussions. Recent excavations at Burgh-by-Sands (OA North 2002), for instance, have raised the possibility of an 'industrial zone' stretching along the road from the east gate of Burgh II fort, and similar results have been obtained from excavations along Botchergate, Carlisle (CAU 2001; OA North 2001). There is, as yet, insufficient information to propose a similar scenario at Old Carlisle, but the complete absence of 'burnt clay nodules' and 'abundant charcoal' within the present study area contrasts with the results of excavations to the south of the fort (Bellhouse 1959), and may tentatively suggest that the two areas had different functions.
- 6.1.3 The extent of the extramural settlement beyond the east gate of the fort at Old Carlisle is uncertain, and speculations are based entirely on aerial photography. The present study has certainly confirmed that there is considerable activity in excess of 100m from the fort's east gate, and has reinforced the analysis of aerial photographs of the area (Higham and Jones 1975).
- 6.1.4 The eastern edge of the settlement was not identified during the course of the present study, and, whilst evidence from aerial photography suggests that it is close to Old Carlisle Farm, Higham and Jones (1975) have suggested the presence of 'native-style' settlement in the vicinity. This included '*an agglomeration of rectangular boxes*', representing Roman agriculture, and '*a substantial native style settlement*' lying c1km to the south, that was linked to the fort by a ditched trackway (*op cit*, 25). Similarly, at Jenkin's Cross, some 4km to the east, Higham and Jones identified a branch road that deviated from the main Roman route to a major native-style settlement at Sandy Brow (*ibid*). Any opportunity to examine archaeologically the interface between 'military-style' and 'native-style' settlements, as may be provided at Old Carlisle, may be seen to be of significance. It is hoped that any future development work in the area will be closely monitored in order to provide more information.

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## APPENDIX 1 PROJECT DESIGN

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May 2002

Oxford  
Archaeology  
North

OLD CARLISLE,  
WIGTON

CUMBRIA

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

### ***Proposals***

*The following project design is offered in response to a request from English Heritage for an archaeological recording at Old Carlisle Fort, Cumbria.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) (formerly Lancaster University Archaeological Unit) has been invited by English Heritage to submit a project design and costs for archaeological recording at Old Carlisle Farm, Wigton, Cumbria (NY 2614 4614). The site is within the area of a the vicus of the *Olenacum* Roman Fort and is a scheduled ancient monument (No CU8). An area of 12m x 17m has been subject to a top-soil strip in the course of a farm development, and a programme of archaeological work is required to provide a mitigation record of the archaeological features that have been exposed.
- 1.1.2 **Archaeological Background:** the proposed development is within the vicus, of the *Olenacum* Roman fort. The vicus as revealed from oblique aerial photography taken by St Joseph in the 1960's covers approximately 5.8 hectares. The substantial nature of the vicus remains is illustrated by Stukeley (1776) who described a road leading from the east gate of the fort with the square plots of the buildings on either side. Bellhouse (1959) undertook excavations to the south of the fort in 1956 and recorded stone built buildings with occupation dates in the third and fourth centuries.
- 1.1.3 The site of the development is immediately north of the Roman road extending out from the east gate of the fort, and is on a prime area of ribbon development for the vicus. Aerial photographs show off-shoot roads extending north out from the main easterly Roman road, which extend through the area of the development. These are set close together and are comparable to examples from Walton-le-Dale, where substantial stone buildings were found in between (R Newman pers comm). Considering that, as late as 1725, there were substantial surface remains of stone structures within this area, it is not surprising that archaeological remains have been revealed in the course of the groundworks of the present development.

### 1.2 OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY NORTH

- 1.2.1 OA North has considerable experience of the evaluation and excavation of sites of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large scale projects during the past 18 years. Evaluations and assessments have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables. OA North has undertaken considerable numbers of archaeological excavations and evaluations both in Carlisle and in the Carlisle area. These include excavations at St Nicholas Street, Carlisle and OA North, along with the Archaeological Practice, undertook a large excavation at the Cumbria College of Art and Design, at Stanwix to the north of Carlisle.
- 1.2.2 OA North and all its members of staff operate subject to the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) Code of Conduct and OA North is a registered organisation of the IFA (No 17).

## 2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The following programme has been designed in accordance with a verbal brief by Caron Newman, English Heritage, to provide a programme of archaeological recording of features exposed in the course of the developments top-soil strip. A visual inspection (C Newman pers comm) suggests that only demolition debris is presently exposed, but it is probable that this overlies significant archaeological deposits. In order to minimise disturbance to the archaeology of the area it is required that the exposed surface be subject to a light clean and that the archaeological features be subject to detailed planning. A written report will be compiled for the results, which will assess the significance of the data generated by this programme within a local and regional context.

## 3. METHODS STATEMENT

- 3.1 The following work programme is submitted in line with the stages and objectives of the archaeological work summarised above.

### 3.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

- 3.2.1 An area of c12m x 17m has been stripped of topsoil revealing archaeological features. The programme of recording will involve the cleaning of the exposed surface and the planned recording of the features. There is no requirement to excavate deeper than the surface clean, as this would result in unnecessary disturbance to the archaeological stratigraphy.
- 3.2.2 The surface would be subject to cleaning by trowel or hoe as appropriate sufficient to expose the archaeological features and stratigraphy. Recording will comprise a full description and preliminary classification of features or materials revealed, and their accurate location (on plan, and as grid coordinates where appropriate). In normal circumstances, field recording will also include a continual process of analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of the data, in order to establish the necessity for any further more detailed recording that may prove essential.
- 3.2.3 All archaeological information collected in the course of fieldwork will be recorded in standardised form, and will include accurate national grid references, and will provide sufficient pictorial record (plans with both black and white and colour photographs) to identify and illustrate individual features. The features will be recorded by a combination of instrument survey and manual planning to create a detailed site plan that is precisely located into the surrounding topography. A photographic record will be undertaken simultaneously. The recording techniques and procedures employed by OA North for such detailed recording represent current best practice.
- 3.2.4 Results of the field investigation will be recorded using a paper system, adapted from that used by Centre for Archaeology of English Heritage. The archive will include both a photographic record and accurate large scale plans at an appropriate scale (1:50 and 1:20).
- 3.2.5 The costs assume that a moderate complexity of archaeological features will be identified; if, however, there is a high complexity of features exposed there may be a need for additional time on site to provide for the recording. Any variation to the costings will be subject to agreement with English Heritage.
- 3.2.6 **Finds:** All artefacts and ecofacts will be recorded using the same system, and will be handled and stored according to standard practice (following current Institute of Field Archaeologists guidelines) in order to minimise deterioration. It is understood that a low-level of artefacts has been revealed as a result of the exposure of the ground surface and the recording programme has been costed on the basis that a low level of artefacts is revealed. If, however, a higher than anticipated amount of artefacts are revealed then there will need to be a variation to the costings to provide for appropriate specialists reporting. Any variation to the costing will be subject to agreement with English Heritage.

### 3.4 EVALUATION REPORT

- 3.4.1 **Archive:** the results of the fieldwork will form the basis of a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. It will include summary processing and analysis of all features, finds, or palaeoenvironmental data recovered during fieldwork, which will be catalogued by context. All artefacts will be processed to MAP2 standards and will be assessed by our in-house finds specialists. This archive can be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format, and a synthesis (in the form of the index to the archive and the report) will be included in the Cumbria Sites and Monuments Record. OA North practice is to deposit the original record archive of projects (paper, magnetic and plastic media) with the appropriate County Record Office, and a full copy of the record archive (microform or microfiche) together with the material archive (artefacts, ecofacts, and samples) with the appropriate museum.
- 3.4.3 **Report:** one bound and one unbound copy of a written synthetic report will be submitted to English Heritage, and further copies submitted to the County Sites and Monuments Record. The report will include a copy of this project design, and indications of any agreed departure from that design. It will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed above and will include a full index of archaeological features identified in the course of the project, together with appropriate illustrations, including detailed plans and sections indicating the locations of

archaeological features. The report will include a complete bibliography of sources from which data has been derived.

- 3.4.4 This report will identify areas of defined archaeology, the location of the excavation area. An assessment and statement of the actual and potential archaeological significance of the site within the broader context of regional and national archaeological priorities will be made. Illustrative material will include a location map, and plans.

### 3.5 GENERAL CONDITIONS

- 3.5.1 **Access:** liaison for basic site access will be undertaken through English Heritage.
- 3.5.2 **Health and Safety:** full regard will, of course, be given to all constraints (services) during the survey, as well as to all Health and Safety considerations. The OA North Health and Safety Statement conforms to all the provisions of the SCAUM (Standing Conference of Unit Managers) Health and Safety manual. Risk assessments are undertaken as a matter of course for all projects. The Unit Safety Policy Statement will be provided to the client, if required.
- 3.5.3 **Confidentiality:** the report is designed as a document for the specific use of the client for the particular purpose as defined in this project design, and should be treated as such. Any requirement to revise or reorder the material for submission or presentation to third parties or for any other explicit purpose can be fulfilled, but will require separate discussion and funding.
- 3.5.4 **Project Monitoring:** any proposed changes to this project design will be agreed with English Heritage. If required a meeting with English Heritage can be established at the outset of the project.
- 3.5.5 **Insurance:** the insurance in respect of claims for personal injury to or the death of any person under a contract of service with the unit and arising out of an in the course of such person's employment shall comply with the employers' liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969 and any statutory orders made there under. For all other claims to cover the liability of OA North, in respect of personal injury or damage to property by negligence of OA North or any of its employees, there applies the insurance cover of £2m for any one occurrence or series of occurrences arising out of one event.
- 3.5.6 **Reinstatement:** it is understood that there will be no requirement for reinstatement of the ground following the recording programme.

## 4. WORK TIMETABLE

- 4.1 It is envisaged that the various stages of the project outlined above would follow on consecutively, where appropriate. The phases of work would comprise:

### *Archaeological Recording*

A four day period would be required for this element

### *Report*

A ten day period would be required to complete this element.

- 4.2 OA North can execute projects at very short notice once an agreement has been signed with the client. The project is scheduled for completion within three weeks from the completion of the field work.
- 4.3 The project will be under the project management of **Jamie Quartermaine, BA Surv Dip MIFA** (OA North Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed. All Unit staff are experienced, qualified archaeologists, each with several years professional expertise.

## APPENDIX 2 CONTEXT LIST

CONTEXT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	DEPTH BELOW GROUND
01	Turf and topsoil	-
02	Layer – very dark brown sandy-clay	0.26m
03	Surface – Roman road	0.30m
04	Stone structure – comprises walls 13 and 14	0.28m
05	Large, worked stone	0.33m
06	Stone spread to south of road 03	0.23m
07	Layer – mid-orange brown silty-sand	0.31m
08	Clay and cobbles foundation	0.32m
09	Stone spread to north of road 03	0.26m
10	Metalled surface - ?floor	0.36m
11	Three sub-rectangular stones placed across road 03	0.32m
12	Sub-rectangular stones placed along road 03	0.31m
13	East/west aligned stone wall – component of structure 04	0.28m
14	North/south aligned stone wall - component of structure 04	0.29m
15	Alternate deposit flat slabs of limestone with 'soft spots' of sandy-clay soil	0.30m

□



## APPENDIX 3

### OUTLINE FINDS CATALOGUE

Context	OR no	Material	Category	Quantity	Description	Date
1	1014	Silver	Coin	1	Denarius. Poor condition.	Second century
1	1015	Glass	Vessel/Window	7	Blue-green mould-blown bottle base, three fragments of blue-green ?flask rim, and three fragments of window glass.	Second century
1	1016	Ceramic	Vessel	48	Orange oxidised fabrics.	Second century?
1	1017	Ceramic	Vessel	12	Greywares.	Second century?
1	1018	Ceramic	Vessel	2	Nene Valley colour-coat wares.	Second/third century
1	1019	Ceramic	Vessel	15	Samian.	Second century
1	1020	Ceramic	Vessel	11	Amphora (Dressel type 20).	First to third century
1	1021	Ceramic	Vessel	19	Black Burnished Ware Category 1.	Second century or later
1	1022	Industrial debris		3	Fragments of slag.	
1	1023	Stone	Roof tile?	2	Heavily burnt slate.	
1	1024	Stone	Roof tile?	8	Slightly burnt sandstone.	
4	1011	Ceramic	building material	2	Broken tile fragment, including one tegula-type roof tile.	
4	1012	Ceramic	Vessel	4	Amphora (Dressel type 20).	First to third century
4	1012	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Oxidised ware.	Second century
4	1012	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Mortaria.	Second century
4	1013	Ceramic	Vessel	2	Samian.	Second century
4	1013	Ceramic	Vessel	3	Nene Valley colour-coat wares.	Second/third century
7	1010	Iron	Wedge	1		
8	1004	Stone	Roof tile?	1	Lakeland slate roofing slab, pegged.	
8	1005	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Mortarium.	Second century
8	1006	Iron	Nail	36		
8	1007	Iron	Buckle?	1	D-shaped buckle?	
8	1008	Iron	Spike	1		
8	1009	Iron	Object	1		

10	1001	Iron	Nail	4	Heavily corroded, two fragments, two complete examples.	
10	1002	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Samian.	Second century
10	1002	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Severn Valley ware.	Second century
10	1003	Copper alloy	Fitting	1	Harness fitting?	Second century

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## ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 1 Old Carlisle: location plan



Figure 2 Location of the study area relative to the position of the Roman fort (after Higham and Jones 1975)

Figure 3 Detailed plan of the Trench

Figure 4 Detailed plan of structures **04** and **08**



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## PLATES

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Plate 1: Aerial view of Old Carlisle fort and associated roads, taken by JK St Joseph in 1949

Plate 2: General view of the site looking west, showing road **03** and structures **04** and **08**

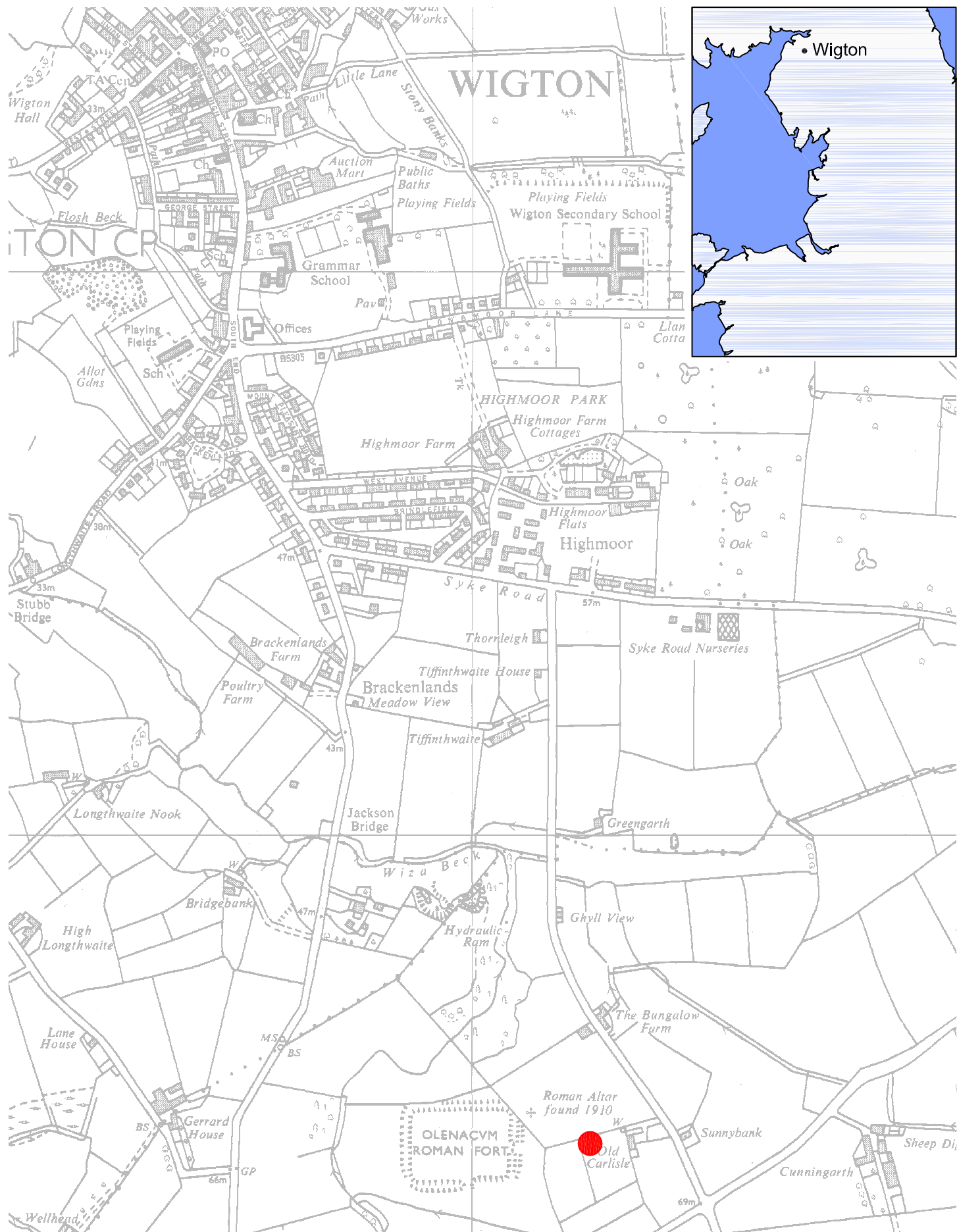
Plate 3: Detail of road **03**

Plate 4: Structure **04** and stone **05**, looking south-west

Plate 5: The western wall of structure **04**, looking west

Plate 6: Large worked stone **05**

Plate 7: Looking east across structure **08** and surface **10**



based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:10000  
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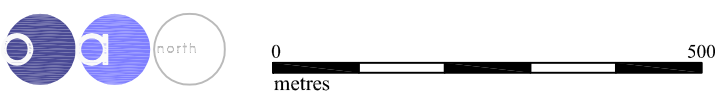


Figure 1: Old Carlisle Location Plan

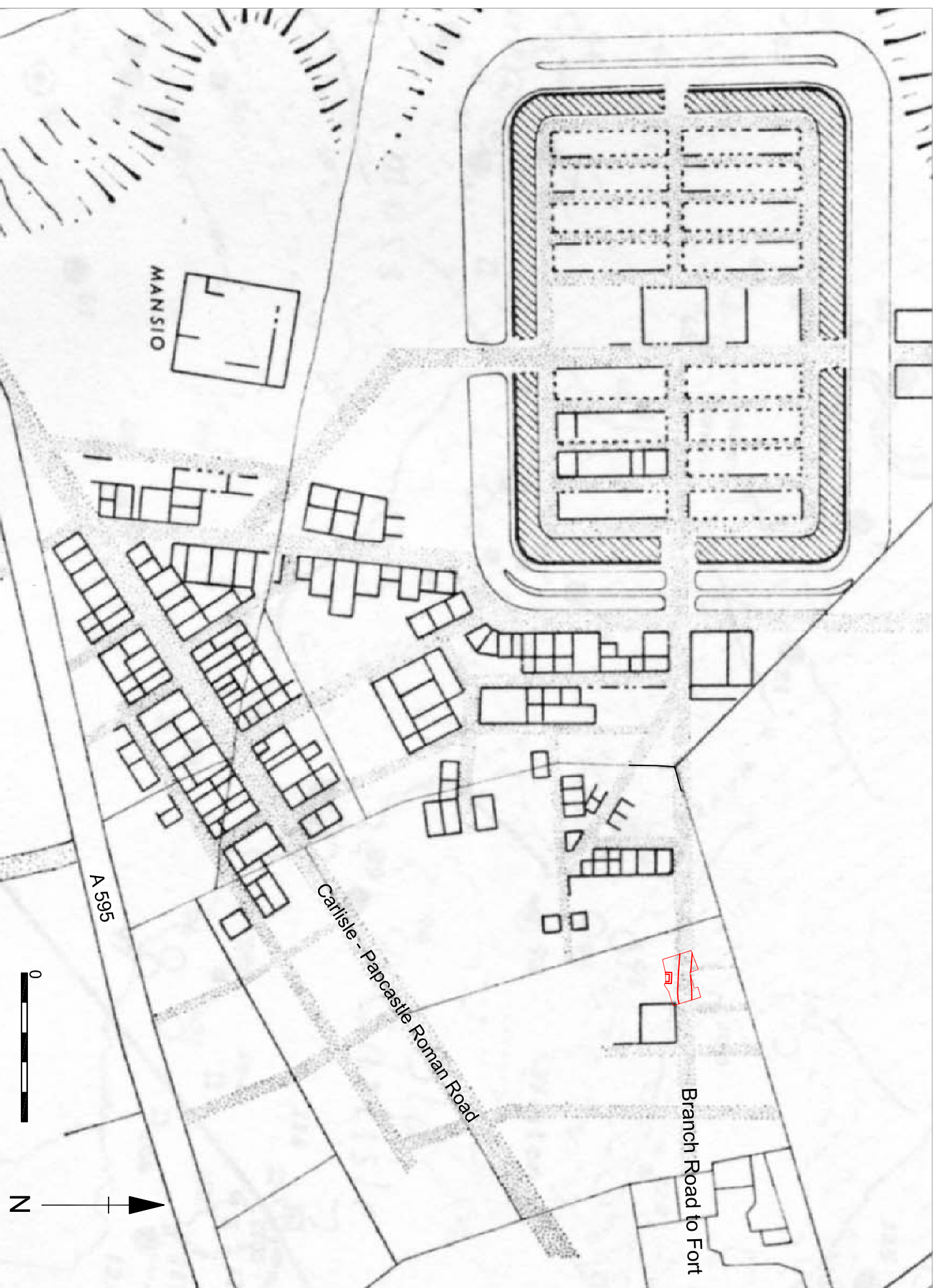


Figure 2 : Location of the study area relative to the position of the Roman fort (after Higham and Jones 1975)



**Oxford Archaeology North**  
Storey Institute  
Meeting House Lane  
Lancaster  
LA1 1TF  
Tel 01524 848666  
Fax 01524 848606

PROJECT:

Old Carlisle, Wigton

DRAWING No:

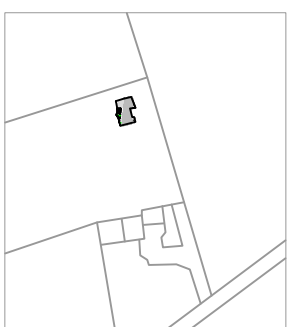
03

SCALE: 1:100 at A4

DRAWN BY: ELC

DATE: September 2002

LOCATION:



KEY

- In situ masonry
- Rubble
- Roman road
- Edge of excavation

TITLE:

Detailed plan of trench

COMMISSIONED BY:

English Heritage

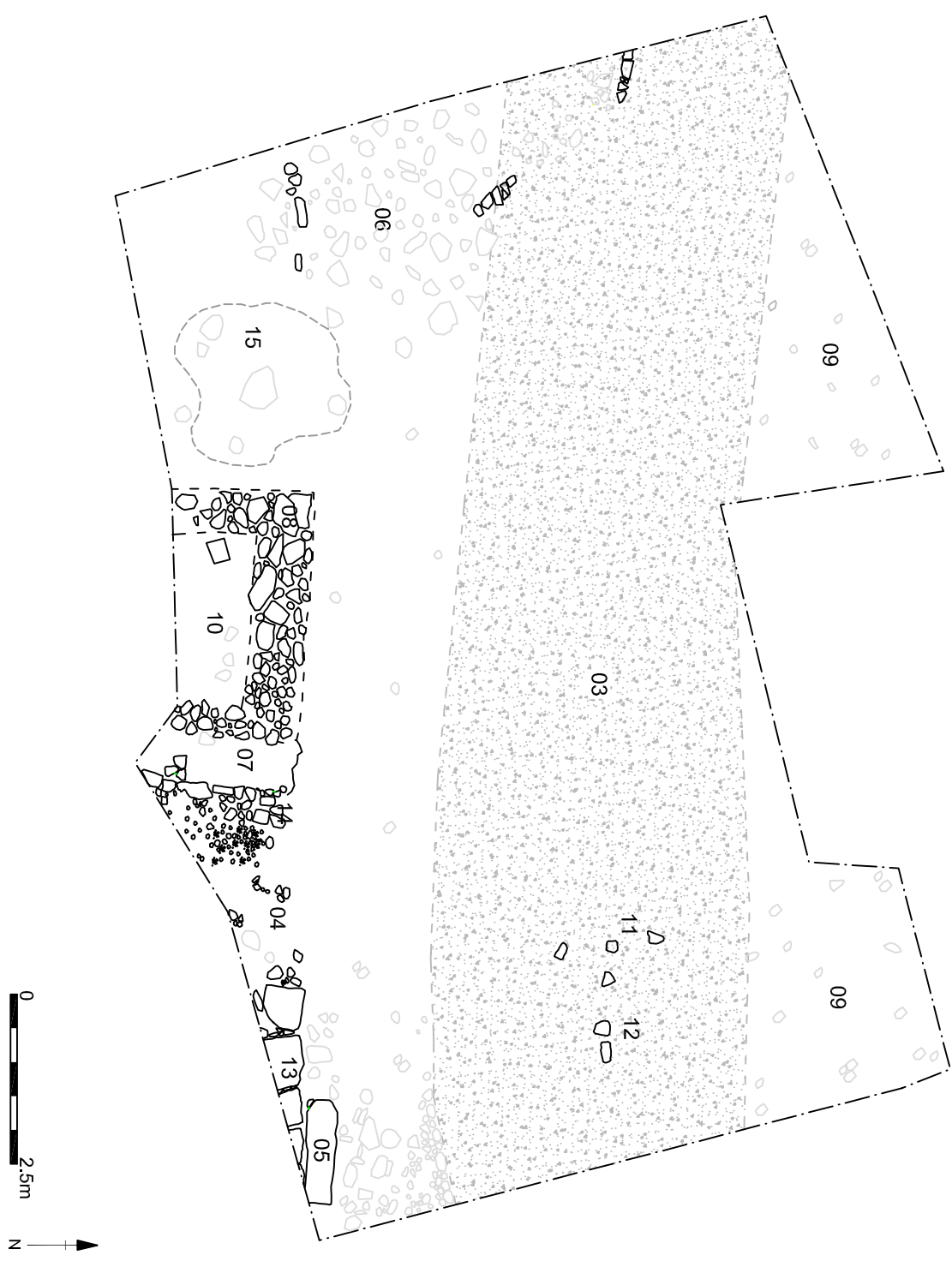


Figure 3: Detailed Plan of the Trench



**Oxford Archaeology North**  
 Storey Institute  
 Meeting House Lane  
 Lancaster  
 LA1 1TF  
 Tel 01524 848666  
 Fax 01524 848606

PROJECT:

**Old Carlisle, Wigton**

DRAWING NO:

04

SCALE:

1:50 at A4

DRAWN BY:

ELC

DATE:

September 2002

LOCATION:



KEY

In situ masonry

Rubble

Roman road

Edge of excavation

TITLE:

**Detailed plan of structures  
 04 and 08**

COMMISSIONED BY:

**English Heritage**

Figure 4 : Detailed Plan of Structures 04 and 08





Plate 1: Aerial view of Old Carlisle fort and associated roads, taken by JK St Joseph in 1949. The main Roman road can be seen on the right (south) of the fort, and the branch road leading to the east gate.





Plate 2: General view of the site looking west, showing road **03** and structures **04** and **08**

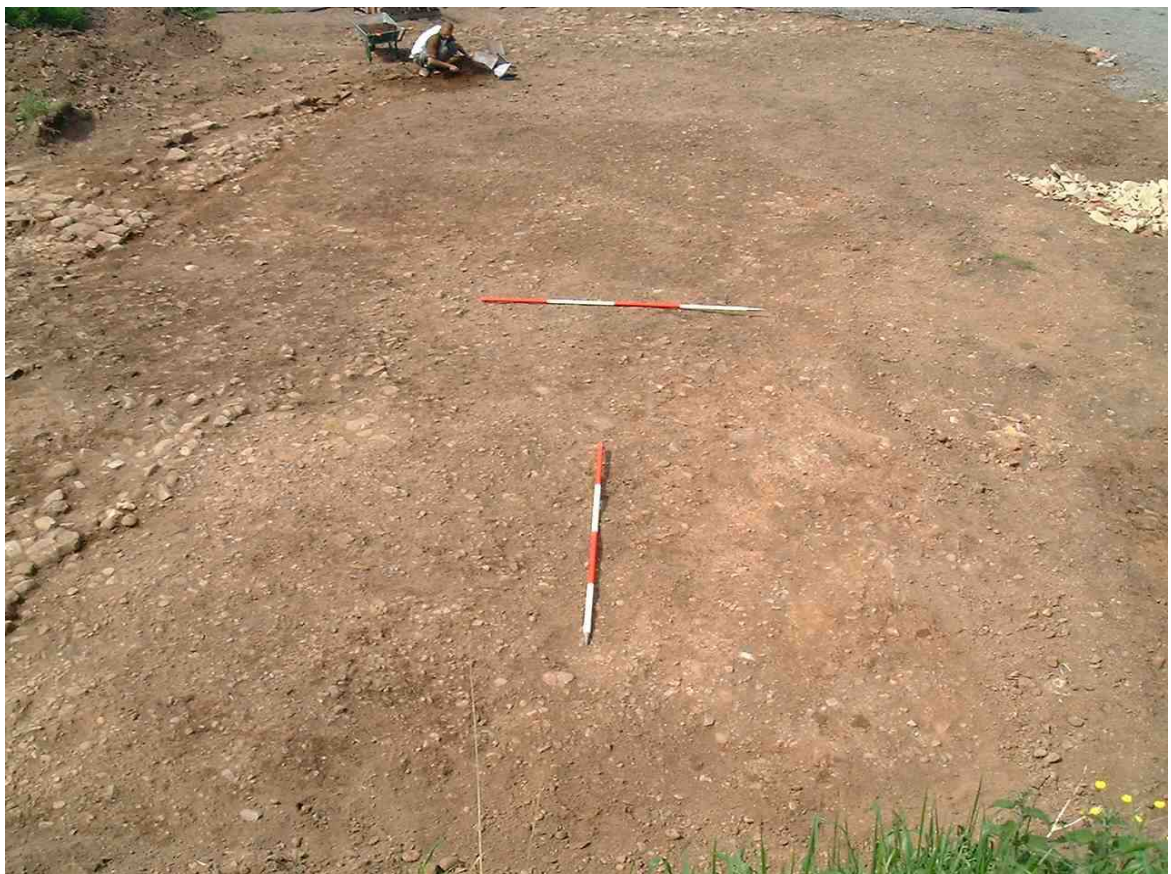


Plate 3: Detail of road **03**





Plate 4: Structure **04** and stone **05**, looking south-west



Plate 5: The western wall of structure **04**, looking east





Plate 6: Large worked stone *05*



Plate 7: Looking east across structure *08* and surface *10*