

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Greta Bridge Roman fort, vicus and section of Roman road

PARISH: BRIGNALL
ROKEBY

DISTRICT: TEESDALE

COUNTY: DURHAM

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 32721

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): NZ08451314
NZ08551336
NZ08761318

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes the remains of a Roman fort, an associated civilian settlement or vicus and a section of the Roman road which linked Dere Street at Scotch Corner to Carlisle across the Stainmore Pass. The monument is contained within three separate areas of protection.

The Roman fort, which is situated on a raised terrace on the left bank of the River Greta, is visible as a rectangular enclosure aligned north east to south west. The exact date for the construction of the fort is uncertain; some evidence suggests it was constructed during the first century AD, but it may be as late as the late second century or the early third century. In 1793 an inscription was found near the north gate of the fort dating to between 205 and 208 AD; this suggested that there had been major work at the fort during the reign of the Emperor Septimus Severus. It remains uncertain whether this work represented the original construction of the fort or a remodelling of an earlier construction.

The fort measures a maximum of 140m by 95m within its defensive ramparts and ditches. On the south side, where the defences are best preserved, there are the prominent remains of a rampart and two ditches. The rampart, which is 11m wide, stands to a maximum height of 2.4m. The medial ditch is up to 1.8m deep and 6m wide, while the outer ditch is 3m deep and 12m wide; it has a slight counterscarp bank on its outer edge which stands up to 0.6m high and 3m wide. There is a causeway and a gateway through the centre of the south wall of the fort, measuring 6m and 6.5m wide respectively. On the eastern side of the fort which fronts the riverside, a single rampart stands to a maximum height of 3m. Below the rampart, the steep slopes of the terrace fall to the river side. On the western side of the fort, the rampart is visible as a scarp standing to 1.8m high; the outer ditch on this side has become infilled and is thought to survive below ground level as a buried feature, except at the south west corner where it is visible as a shallow depression. The northern part of the fort lies within the grounds of the Morrit Arms Hotel and Burns Cottage, where it survives as buried archaeological features. Archaeological excavation in advance of developments at Burns Cottage in 1994 and 1996 revealed the presence of Roman deposits which were dated on the evidence of Roman pottery and coins to the second and third century. These remains which lie in the north western corner of the fort were interpreted as part of the earthen

rampart of the fort and parts of a stone building.

Immediately to the north of the fort there are the buried remains of the Roman road and the vicus. These remains were identified and partially excavated in the 1970s in advance of the A66 road re-alignment at Greta Bridge. The excavations took place to the east of the River Greta and the remains of the Roman road, a large timber courtyard building and at least 12 rectangular strip houses were uncovered. These remains lie largely intact sealed beneath the carriageway of the modern A66 and in the fields immediately to the north and south of the present road.

The Roman road survives as a cambered gravel surface 6m wide, later replaced in stone, and flanked by stone lined drains. The road is thought to be of first century date but it remained an important arterial route, especially in the middle and later third century. The remains of a link road connecting the Roman fort to the main Roman road and the buildings of the vicus are thought to survive below ground as buried features; part of this linking road was observed in 1928 during road works immediately to the north of the Morrit Arms Hotel. The excavations during the early 1970s also uncovered evidence for a large timber courtyard building situated immediately south of the Roman road; it is thought that this building may have functioned as a mutatio or post house. The building was burned down at the end of the third century AD and its site was subsequently occupied by the vicus settlement.

The remains of the vicus survive as a series of timber and stone buildings, linked together by areas of paving and cobbelling, aligned for some 600m along the north and south sides of the Roman road. The majority of the buildings were divided into two parts, with a large hall fronting onto the roadside and a rear room, thought to be the domestic accommodation. Several of the buildings also had a portico on the front, suggesting that this part of the building was used for commercial activity.

Two areas of the vicus were uncovered and partially excavated in the 1970's.

The first lies 200m north west of the fort on the west bank of the Tutta Beck.

In this area two stone buildings, thought to form part of a larger complex, were uncovered. The buildings had been constructed over the remains of earlier features. The first building was 26m by 6m and the second was 6.5m wide and of uncertain length. Roman pottery and coins recovered from the partial excavation of this area suggests occupation in the third and early fourth century. These buildings are thought to represent the western limit of the vicus. The second area examined in the 1970s lies to the east of the River Greta some 200m north east of the fort. A total of 11 stone buildings were observed lying on both sides of the Roman road. Four lie to the north and range in length from 9m to 22m long by 6m to 8m wide. Seven buildings were observed lying to the south of the road, measuring from 21m to 8m long by 6m to 7m wide. The evidence from Roman pottery and coins suggests that this part of the vicus was occupied from the mid to late second century and during the fourth century. Evidence of important iron working was also recovered from this part of the vicus on an area adjacent to the road. It is thought to have been small scale in nature and related to the production of nails and iron fittings for buildings. A watching brief in the area immediately to the east of this part of the vicus produced some evidence of cremation burials; the existence of burials, which are normally located beyond the limit of the settlement, is thought to indicate that this is the eastern limit of the vicus at Greta Bridge. The full extent of the vicus is not yet understood and further remains may survive beyond the area of protection. The 17th century Greta Bridge, which stands immediately adjacent to this monument, is the subject of a separate scheduling.

A number of features are excluded from the scheduling: these are all walls, including the East Entrance Screen to Rokeby Park, which is Listed Grade II, fences, gates and posts, the tarmac surfaces of all roads and yards, children's playthings and garden furniture, liquid petroleum and gas installations, sheds and kennels, the swimming pool pump and tanks, Burns Cottage, the Lodge (a Grade II Listed Building), Tutta Bridge, and the

circular swimming pool in the grounds of Burns Cottage; however, the ground beneath all these features is included in the scheduling.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

Roman forts served as permanent bases for auxiliary units of the Roman Army. In outline they were straight sided rectangular enclosures with rounded corners, defined by a single rampart of turf, puddled clay or earth with one or more outer ditches. Some forts had separately defended, subsidiary enclosures or annexes, allowing additional storage space or for the accommodation of troops and convoys in transit. Although built and used throughout the Roman period, the majority of forts were constructed between the mid first and mid second centuries AD. Some were only used for short periods of time but others were occupied for extended periods on a more or less permanent basis. In the earlier forts, timber was used for gateways, towers and breastworks. From the beginning of the second century AD there was a gradual replacement of timber with stone.

Roman forts are rare nationally and are extremely rare south of the Severn Trent line. As one of a small group of Roman military monuments, which are important in representing army strategy and therefore government policy, forts are of particular significance to our understanding of the period. All Roman forts with surviving archaeological potential are considered to be nationally important.

Vici are extra mural civilian settlements comprising houses, roads and other buildings attached or adjacent to a Roman military emplacement, usually a fort or a fortress, occupied during the period in which the fort was in use. Fort vici tend to lack the planned rectangular street grids, public buildings and well appointed town houses which are characteristic of the public towns of the province. Some fort vici are contained within the annexe of a fort while others appear to have developed on open ground along the access roads of the forts. Fort vici were civilian settlements associated with military establishments and many are thought to have been the camps of traders and merchants providing services and goods to troops. The most common type of building found in a fort vicus is the long narrow strip building, which appears to have been used both for domestic and commercial purposes. Fort vici are situated almost exclusively in the frontier regions, or the hinterlands of the frontiers; there is therefore a major concentration of known examples in Northern England and the region of the Scottish Border with marked concentrations on Hadrian's Wall. As a rare monument type with fewer than 60 recorded examples, which are highly representative of their period, all examples exhibiting significant surviving archaeological remains are considered of national importance.

Roman roads were artificially made-up routes introduced to Britain by the Roman army from c.AD 43. They facilitated both the conquest of the province and its subsequent administration. Their main purpose was to serve the *Cursus Publicus*, or imperial mail service. Express messengers could travel up to 150 miles per day on the network of Roman roads throughout Britain and Europe, changing horses at roadside 'mutationes' (posting stations set every eight miles on major roads) and stopping overnight at 'mansiones' (rest houses located every 20-25 miles). In addition, throughout the Roman period and later, Roman roads acted as commercial routes and became foci for settlement and industry. Mausolea were sometimes built flanking roads during the Roman period while, in the Anglian and medieval periods, Roman roads often served as property boundaries. Although a number of roads fell out of use soon after the withdrawal of Rome from the province in the fifth century AD, many have continued in use down to the present day and are consequently sealed beneath modern roads.

On the basis of construction technique, two main types of Roman road are distinguishable. The first has widely spaced boundary ditches and a broad

elaborate agger comprising several layers of graded material. The second usually has drainage ditches and a narrow simple agger of two or three successive layers. In addition to ditches and construction pits flanking the sides of the road, features of Roman roads can include central stone ribs, kerbs and culverts. With the exception of the extreme south west of the country, Roman roads are widely distributed throughout England and extend into Wales and lowland Scotland. They are highly representative of the period of Roman administration and provide important evidence of Roman civil engineering skills as well as the pattern of Roman conquest and settlement. A high proportion of examples exhibiting good survival are considered to be worthy of protection.

The Roman fort, vicus and road at Greta Bridge are well preserved and contain significant archaeological deposits. Taken together they will add to our knowledge and understanding of the military conquest and occupation of North Britain.

SCHEDULING HISTORY

Monument included in the Schedule on 17th December 1929 as:

COUNTY/NUMBER: Yorkshire 161

NAME: Greta Bridge Roman Camp

Scheduling amended on 1st April 1974 to:

COUNTY/NUMBER: Durham 114

NAME: Greta Bridge Roman Camp

The reference of this monument is now:

NATIONAL MONUMENT NUMBER: 32721

NAME: Greta Bridge Roman fort, vicus and section of Roman road

SCHEDULING REVISED ON 14th February 2000