

Northern Archaeological Associates

SAIGHTON CAMP, CHESTER, CHESHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK BASED ASSESSMENT

**for
COMMERCIAL ESTATES GROUP**

NAA 05/74

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA) were commissioned by Commercial Estates Group to undertake a desk-based assessment of Saughton Camp, a former military camp situated to the south-east of Chester, Cheshire, proposed for a programme of redevelopment. The study area comprises a 1km wide zone around the periphery of the former camp, area centred upon SJ6420 4290. The site lies at the southern extremity of the village of Huntington and is now separated from the village by the A55T Chester bypass and is situated at an elevation of approximately 20m AOD. (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The study area is approximately 3.2 km² in extent and comprises a tract of land situated to the east of the River Dee that was predominantly concerned with agriculture prior to the construction of the camp in the late 1930s, and the present village of Huntington, in the early post-war years.

2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Geology and soils

- 2.1 The bedrock morphology of the Chester area is composed of undifferentiated sandstones of the Permian and Triassic period (BGS 1979). The drift geology predominantly comprises Boulder Clay and Morainic Drift. (BGS 1977). The soils of the area mainly comprise the stagnogleys of the Salop association with deposits of the sandy and peaty soils of the Isleham 2 association being found in low-lying areas (SSEW 1983 and Jarvis *et al* 1984).

Topography and land-use

- 2.2 The majority of the proposed development area is situated on relatively level or gently sloping ground to the east of the River Dee, approximately 3.5km south-east of the present-day centre of Chester. This area lies on the fringes of the village of Huntington which is almost completely dedicated to residential development. The camp lies to the south of the A55 and to the east of the intersection of the B5130 with a minor road, Sandy Lane, leading to the village of Saughton situated a further 2.5km to the south-east. Aside from a water works located to the west of the camp, the prevailing land-use is almost exclusively agricultural.

3.0 METHODOLOGY AND INFORMATION SOURCES

- 3.1 The principal aims of the archaeological assessment were:
- to identify known archaeological sites within or immediately adjacent to the proposed development
 - to identify areas with the potential to contain any unrecorded archaeological remains
 - to assess the effects of the proposed development and ancillary works upon archaeological sites and their settings

- to propose mitigation measures which could be built into the development proposals to avoid, reduce or remedy any potential adverse effects identified.

3.2 This report is based upon a review of existing available information and desk-based studies. The following organisations were researched for the assessment:

- Cheshire County Council Historic and Environment Section
- Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service
- Chester City Council
- Chester Library
- Defence Estates Ltd
- English Heritage
- National Army Museum

3.3 The following data sources were utilised for the assessment:

- Cheshire Historic Environment Record (HER)
- Chester City Historic Environment Record (HER)
- aerial photographs
- published and unpublished historical and archaeological studies
- cartographic sources (including historic Ordnance Survey maps)
- National Monuments Record (NMR)

3.4 A visual inspection of the proposed development site was carried out on 1st April 2005 using a plan of the proposed development area supplied by Commercial Estates Group. The inspection was carried out with two objectives; to attempt to confirm the presence and assess the condition of previously recorded sites and to attempt to identify additional areas of archaeological potential not previously recorded. The area assessed comprised all of the accessible land within the limits of the proposed development area as defined by Commercial Estates Group.

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Archaeological and historic sites recorded within the vicinity of the proposed development are summarised in the table in Appendix 1. Each site is identified by a site number which is correlated with the Cheshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) number or National Monuments Record (NMR) number or as appropriate. Those sites recorded as a result of historic map regression or other means are identified by site number alone. A central grid reference, suggested classification and date are provided for each site, which are graded in archaeological significance as of 1 (national), 2 (regional) and 3 (local) importance, which is based upon professional judgement and the criteria given in Annex 6 of PPG16. Sites with statutory designations are identified as LB for Listed Buildings or SM for Scheduled Monuments. The location of each site is shown in Figure 2.

- 4.2 A total of 20 cultural heritage sites were recorded within the study area, only one of which (Site 5), a stray Roman coin, was recorded within the development area. There are no Scheduled Monuments or Listed Buildings within the proposed area of development. There are four Scheduled Monuments and one Listed Building but no Registered Battlefield sites, Registered Parks and Gardens or Conservation Areas within the confines of the study area.

Prehistoric

- 4.3 The earliest *in situ* evidence for the early prehistoric period within the County of Cheshire was recovered from Tatton Mere, in the north-west of the county, where evidence for settlement attributable to the Mesolithic period was recovered. Isolated finds of Mesolithic period material have also been recovered from upland areas in the centre and the east of the county. Neolithic settlement activity was recorded at Lindow Moss, also in the north-west of the county, during fieldwork undertaken in 1987. Other Neolithic period activity within the county is attested by the monumental funerary structure at Bridestones and by numerous stray finds of flint and other stone implements of this period at various locations throughout the county.
- 4.4 There is, however, very little archaeological evidence dating to the early prehistoric within the Chester area as a whole. This appears to be a result of the physical landscape of northern Cheshire, the most characteristic features of which are the Triassic sandstone hills, the mid-Cheshire ridge, which range from north to south across the area (Earp and Taylor 1965). The ridge, which rises to a maximum height of around 200m AOD divides the northern part of the county into two. To the east of the ridge there is a plain varying in height between 40 and 80m AOD; to the west a plain varying in height between near sea level and approximately 40m AOD and it is at the western end of this area that Chester is situated. In general, much of the existing evidence for activity originating in the early prehistoric period within the area was recovered from sites situated along the ridge itself, or from coastal areas. The only evidence for activity of Neolithic period within the vicinity of the proposed development is represented by the findspot of a flint or stone axe (Site 1) in the first half of the 20th century. Very little is known of this item or the circumstances of its discovery and its location was not accurately recorded.
- 4.5 The Bronze Age within the county is predominantly represented by the presence of a large number of round barrows. These, however, are clustered on alluvial river terraces, the glacial sands in the centre of the county and in the uplands in the east of the county. A significant number of bronze artefacts, particularly palstaves and axes, are also known, the majority being recovered as stray finds. The only evidence for the Bronze Age within the vicinity of the proposed development is represented by the findspot of a palstave (Site 2) considered to be of northern Italian origin. The object is now in the Grosvenor Museum but its original location was not precisely recorded.
- 4.6 The Iron Age in Cheshire is largely represented by a series of hillforts located on the mid-Cheshire ridge. Recent air photographs have also revealed a number of lowland farmsteads in the north of the county, particularly along the Rivers

Mersey and Bollin. There are no known sites attributable to the Iron Age within the vicinity of the proposed development.

Roman

- 4.7 Evidence for the Roman occupation of north-west Cheshire is dominated by the legionary fortress of *Deva*, at Chester, constructed in the Flavian period in order to control the northern areas of Wales and north-western England. The fortress was occupied by two legions at various times in its history, *Legio II Adiuterix pia fidelis* and *Legio XX Valeria Victrix* (Jones and Mattingley 1990, 92) and may occupy the site of an earlier military site established in the Claudio-Neronian period (ibid 88). The fort acted as a port as it was situated close to the (then) mouth of the River Dee and also linked a network of roads. *Deva* was connected to the legionary fortress at Wroxeter, via a fort at Whitchurch, by a road leading to the south-east. Communications with forts at Northwich and Manchester was achieved by a road leading to the north-east. Two roads were constructed westwards to facilitate movement and communications with a number of military establishments in Wales. The most northerly of these, which skirted the coast, led to forts at Caerhun and Carnarvon, the more southerly connected Chester to the fort at Caer Gai, possibly via a fort at Llanfor in the early period. The line of the road from Whitchurch lies approximately 1.5km to the west of the site of the proposed development, on the western bank of the River Dee, and the line of the road to Northwich partly follows the line of the present A51 trunk road to the north.
- 4.8 The strategic importance of *Deva* continued into the 4th century, long after the former legionary fort at Usk, in southern Wales, had been abandoned in favour of Carleon, and Wroxeter had evolved into a major town. The presence of the fortress clearly had a substantial influence on the wider surrounding area. Industry of this period has been identified at Holt where the legionary tile works was established; Northwich, Middlewich and Nantwich all appear to have been involved with the salt industry and at Wilderspool a large complex involved in the production of metalwork, glass and ceramics is known. Rural settlement is exemplified by the farmstead site at Eaton-by-Taporley and recent air photography surveys have identified a number of enclosures of probably Romano-British date on the eastern outskirts of Chester itself.
- 4.9 The only evidence for activity originating in the Roman period within the vicinity of the site of the proposed development is restricted to a number of recorded findspots of coins of this period. Sites 3 and 4 relate to the findspots of two Roman coins on Rowton Moor in 1889. Only one of these was sufficiently well preserved to permit identification, a silver denarius of Lucius Verus, the other being an illegible bronze issue. The precise locations of these finds were not recorded at the time of their discovery. A small bronze issue of Constantine II (Site 5) was recovered from within the proposed development area during the construction of Saighton Camp in 1938-9 but the recovery of a single bronze coin cannot be taken to be indicative of the presence of more tangible archaeological remains within the boundaries of the camp and is more likely to represent a casual loss. Two further coins of the Roman period (Sites 6 and 7) were found by metal detecting from an area to the north-west of Huntington Hall. The coins, a sestertius of Vespasian and a denarius of Hadrian, were

recovered in association with an undiagnostic lead disc (Site 20) which could, therefore, also belong to the Roman period.

Early medieval

- 4.10 Evidence for the pre-Conquest period within the area of the proposed development is largely restricted to that supplied by place names. The former existence of the fortress within the city is supported by the ‘Chester’ element in name of the town. This element is derived from one of a few Latin words, *castra*, to be incorporated into the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary (as *ceaster*) of the post-Roman period. The word originally meant ‘fortified camp’ (Bidwell 1997, 99). The site of the proposed development is almost entirely surrounded by settlements with Old English place-name elements, the most common being the suffix *-‘tun’*, for example Eccleston, Huntington, Saughton, Rowton and Waverton. The *‘tun’* element of all of these names is the most common Old English term for a settlement (Gelling 1984, 318), the prefix in each case being descriptive. Eccleston is an interesting name given that it alludes to an earlier establishment. The name is composed of two elements, *‘egles’* which is of Celtic derivation and the Old English *‘tun’*, the name translating as ‘the settlement by the Romano-British Christian church’ (Mills 1991, 117). Christians are again recorded in the name ‘Christleton’, which translates as ‘the settlement of the Christians’ (ibid 80). Saughton is composed of the Old English elements *‘salh’* and *‘tun’* translating as ‘the settlement where willow grows’ (ibid 281).
- 4.11 The history of the fortress at Chester, and its environs in the immediate post-Roman period is obscure but continuity of settlement in the vicinity in some form seems plausible. Similarly little is known of the status and function of the city in the early and mid Anglo-Saxon periods other than that the remains of St Werburgh, who died in *c.*AD 700, were translated to Chester from Threckingham in Lincolnshire to save them from Viking desecration. This act suggests that some level of centralised activity, possibly ecclesiastical, in or around Chester at this time. St Werburgh’s shrine at Chester subsequently became a place of pilgrimage until it was defiled by Henry VIII (Attwater 1965, 329).
- 4.12 During the Anglo-Scandinavian period Chester appears to have been within the area of the Danelaw as defined by Alfred’s treaty with the Danes at Wedmore in AD 886 (Graham-Campbell 1989, 27). The boundary of Danelaw extended from the mouth of the River Dee, along the line of Watling Street towards the Thames Estuary east of London. The territory consisted of all of the country north of this line to undefined northern limits somewhere in modern-day Northumberland and southern Scotland. The Danelaw did not last long and Alfred and his successors gradually began to re-establish Anglo-Saxon rule over the northern counties. The Danish army eventually disbanded in AD 896 having been thwarted in its attempts to wrest control of Wessex by Alfred’s new system of defensive settlements, the *‘burhs’*. However further incursions into northern Cheshire probably occurred sometime after AD 902 when the Norse Viking trading colony in Dublin was destroyed and its occupants expelled by the Irish (Richards 1991, 22). The threat of these renewed Viking incursions was met by Aethelred of Mercia, and subsequently by his wife Aethelflaed, by the establishment of a further series of burhs between the years of AD 907 and 915, one of which was

Chester (Biddle 1976, 134). There is also record of a second major influx of Viking settlers into the Wirral in the winter of AD 979-80 (Dolley 1976, 368).

- 4.13 Archaeological evidence for the refurbishment of the Roman period defences of Chester during this period was obtained through excavations undertaken at Linenhall Street in the early 1960s (Biddle 1976, 135). It is also possible that a prolific mint (otherwise just identified as Mercian) was established within the burh in this period (Dolley 1976, 357).
- 4.14 Additional evidence to support Viking period activity in the wider Chester area can be found in a number of overtly Scandinavian place-names in the area, specifically place-names ending in ‘-by’ of which there is a concentration in the Wirral (Richards 1991, 34). This is further supported by a concentration of 10th century coin hoards, some containing hack-silver, within the vicinity of Chester (ibid 21). However there is no archaeological evidence for activity attributable to the early medieval period within the immediate vicinity of the site of the proposed development.

Post-Conquest

- 4.15 After the Norman Conquest there were significant social and political changes within the county. The Domesday Survey of 1086 records that Chester was held by Earl Hugh d’Avranches, and had been devastated, but that many of the houses had subsequently been rebuilt (Hinde 1995, 52). The devastation of Chester may have been the result of King William’s savage campaign of subjugation undertaken in the northern and some midland counties, including Cheshire, in the winter of 1069 and 1070, or alternatively may have been the result of Welsh raiding. Whatever the reason for the destruction, William founded a castle at Chester at this time (Darby 1977, 250) which may have provided the impetus for the rebuilding of the settlement.
- 4.16 Eccleston was held by Gilbert de Venables (Hinde 1995, 52), Huntington and Saughton by St Werburgh’s Church (ibid 53 and 54), Christleton by Robert FitzHugh (ibid 52) but neither Rowton or Waverton are mentioned.
- 4.17 Subsequent to the Norman Conquest large areas of Cheshire were cleared of woodland, drained and brought into cultivation. Several areas of Royal Forest were exempt from this procedure in the 12th century but the county appears to have been relatively prosperous by the late 13th century despite this. This prosperity is reflected in the archaeological record by the large number of moated sites within the county, most of these appear to have been constructed between 1250 and 1350.
- 4.18 There are two moated sites within the study area. The moated site at Huntington Hall (Site 11) is part of a complex of features including the site of a former manor house (Site 10), a bridge over the moat ditch (Site 12) and a series of three fish ponds (Site 13). The whole complex, which may equate with a ‘grange belonging to the Abbot of Chester at Huntington’ mentioned in 1348, is situated approximately 1km to the south-west of the site of the proposed development. The hall was described as being of timber construction in the 17th century but there are no surviving above-ground remains of this building today. The moat is

a large subrectangular ditched structure with outer banks surviving on all but the eastern side. The enclosed island within the moat was subdivided into three sections by two ditches aligned north to south, the central section being further divided by a ditch aligned east to west. The fish ponds are contained within the western section of the platform and all possess elements of water management structures such as dams and water channels. The moat is crossed on its eastern side by a single span, segmented arch, bridge. The sandstone fabric of the structure contains no overtly dateable components but the bridge may represent, or lie on the site of, the original entrance to the site. All four elements of the complex are Scheduled Monuments.

- 4.19 The second of the moated sites within the study area, Site 14, lies immediately adjacent to, but entirely outside of the perimeter of, the south-eastern corner of Saighton Camp. The moat is smaller than that at Huntington Hall and has been partially damaged on its northern side. The site is recorded as being dry in 1968 but was seen to be containing water during the site inspection visit made during the course of this project. The enclosed platform of the moat is now covered in mature trees and dense scrub and the entire site appears to be situated outside of the curtilage of the camp. The site was not designated as a Scheduled Monument during the reviewing of moated sites under the English Heritage Monuments Protection Programme.
- 4.20 A tract of land comprising approximately 1000 acres in the demesnes of Saighton, Huntington and Cheaveley was enclosed and emparked by the Abbot of St Werburgh's in 1514. The resulting deer park (Site 8) appears to have been centred upon the moat at Huntington Hall and elements of what may be part of the park pale survive to the north-east of this. It is thought likely that the park extended as far as Huntington Lane at its eastern limits though its northern and southern extents are not known. Disparkment occurred in the 17th century.
- 4.21 The village of Butter Bache (Site 9) is recorded in documentary sources dating to 1354. The precise location of the site is not known but is thought to lie approximately 1km to the north-west of the site of the proposed development in which case its remains are likely to have been substantially compromised during the construction of the present village of Huntington in the 1930s and 1940s.
- 4.22 Further evidence of activity relating to the medieval period is provided by historic mapping and air photography. The landscape around the site of the proposed development is largely composed of a patchwork of small fields many of which possess elongated forms and slightly curving long boundaries. This pattern is reminiscent of medieval strip field systems which have gradually been enlarged by combination through time. Although there are no surviving enclosure or tithe (the area being exempt from tithes) maps of the area, the pattern of these fields is evident in all of the early Ordnance Survey maps dating from 1872 onwards. Areas of extant ridge and furrow cultivation are also apparent in air photographs of the area, particularly those from 1947 (Plate 1), and these seem to conform to or respect the field system boundaries visible in the historic mapping.

Post-medieval

- 4.23 The post-medieval development of Cheshire, particularly in the 18th and 19th centuries was relatively rapid. The increasing prosperity of the county was a result of progressive industrialisation and improvements in communications networks. Chester was the foremost port in north-western England from the medieval period onwards, and had almost certainly acted as such in the Roman period. However the Dee Estuary gradually silted up through time and other and other centres on the Mersey Estuary, such as Liverpool, were beginning to emerge in competition. Subsequent to the Industrial Revolution the coastal ports also required some form of system of transport to move goods and materials to and from inland centres of production. The initial response to this problem was to build networks of canals.
- 4.24 Construction on the Chester Canal began in 1772. The canal was intended to link the port of Chester to pottery production centres in the midlands and act as competition to the Trent and Mersey canal which was also under construction at this time. The canal, as originally intended, was never completed and fell into dereliction after 1787. Its fortunes were revived after 1796 when the first section of the Ellesmere and Chester canal, intended to run to the River Severn at Shrewsbury via industrial centres in Wales, was completed. This section ran from Netherpool, on the Mersey, to Chester. Netherpool became a major terminal for this canal, expanded rapidly and eventually became Ellesmere Port. The canal provided an important second route to the Mersey from Chester. Financial and logistical problems with the Ellesmere canal also meant that it was never fully completed but a link between this and the Chester Canal north of Nantwich provided a successful, integrated, canal network through the north of the county and the two companies merged in 1813 and became the Ellesmere and Chester Canal Company. This company was forced to join with the Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal Company in 1845, in an attempt to combat competition from the emerging railway companies, and the combined companies renamed as the Shropshire Union Railways and Canal Company shortly after this date. A section of the Shropshire Union Canal running from Chester to Nantwich exists at Christleton and Waverton some 2km to the east of the site of the proposed development (Site 15).
- 4.25 Navigation was improved on the lower reaches of the River Dee (Site 16) by Acts of Parliament passed in 1734, 1744 and 1791. The improvements permitted navigation as far as Almere Ferry when high tides allowed passage of the weirs at Chester. Part of the navigable river lies within the north-western limits of the study area approximately 1.5 km west of the proposed development site.
- 4.26 The advent of efficient networks of railways further fuelled the economic expansion of northern Cheshire from the 1850s onwards with many of the railways converged on Chester. The Chester and Holyhead Railway, intended to speed communications with Ireland by using Holyhead as a port was fully opened by 1850. The company bought the Mold Railway in 1852 which it leased to the Bangor and Carnarvon Railway a year later. This latter railway was extended to Afon Well between the years of 1852 and 1867 in order to meet the Cambrian Railway and exploit the need for the effective transport of stone and roofing slate from this part of Wales. The Chester and Holyhead Railway was

purchased by the London and North West Railway in 1859 and this company went on to develop extensive shipping services to Ireland through Holyhead. Other railway companies with interests in the area included the Great Western Railway, the Great Central Railway and the Cheshire Lines Committee. Although many of these networks have now been partially or completely dismantled, a section of the former London and North West Railway line exists within the study area (Site 17). The line is still in use.

- 4.27 Cartographic and photographic evidence suggests that the majority of the landscape around the site of the proposed development remained primarily concerned with agricultural production up until the years immediately preceding the Second World War. The area to the south of Chester appears to have remained largely unchanged by the Industrial Revolution aside from the excavation of an extraordinary number of small clay or marl extraction pits, including a several within the curtilage of the proposed development site. Some of these pits may originate in periods prior to the post-medieval period but there is little evidence to confirm their main periods of use. The majority of the former marl pits within the site were in-filled during the construction of the camp though a group of four, located at the western side of the camp, were preserved as ornamental ponds until the mid 1960s. A brickworks (Site 18), sited by a spring on the eastern bank of the Caldys Brook, may have once made use of the material obtained from adjacent marl pits. The site, noted on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1872, is situated 0.4km north-east of the northern limits of the proposed development area.
- 4.28 There is only one other recorded site within the study area that is attributable to the post-medieval period. Grange Farmhouse (Site 19), situated approximately 1.5km to the south of the site of the proposed development, contains a date-stone of 1653 within its fabric. The building is a three storey brick built structure, rectangular in plan with two short ranges to the rear. The upper storey was rebuilt in the late 18th century and there are also some late 19th century additions to the building. The farmhouse is a grade II Listed Building.
- 4.29 The only other artificial landscape features occurring within the curtilage of the camp comprise a track and field boundaries. Most of these are attributable to the post-medieval period though some of the former field boundaries may have had their origins within the medieval period. The majority of the former track, situated to the north of the site and apparent on Ordnance Survey maps up until 1938, now lies beneath, or was destroyed during the construction of, the road serving the married quarters and officers' houses. The line of only one of the field boundaries depicted in pre-1938 mapping survives within the camp. The boundary, a ditch and hedgerow which separates the married quarters from the officers' houses in the northern section of the site, may not survive in its original form.

Unknown

- 4.30 One site of unknown date exists within the study area. Site 20 represents the findspot of a cusped lead alloy disc apparently gold plated on one side. The object was found by metal detecting, along with two Roman period coins (Sites

6 and 7), in 1997. Although the disc cannot be precisely dated it would not be unreasonable to assume that it originates in the same period.

Saighton Military Training Camp

- 4.31 Cartographic and photographic sources suggest that Saughton Camp was built in the late 1930s, probably between 1938 and 1939, as a military training camp in response to the threat of war resulting from the worsening political situation in Europe at that time. Prior to the 1930's the 1st, 2nd and 3rd edition 6" and 25" Ordnance Survey maps of 1872, 1899 and 1913, record only field boundaries, a track and marl pits within the proposed development boundary. The village of Huntington did not exist during these periods either, the area which it now occupies again being composed of fields and marl pits. A Public House, the Rake and Pickel, situated at the intersection of the B1530 and Sandy Lane, is noted on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey maps and still survives.
- 4.32 The camp was originally built as a facility to provide for the basic training of volunteer and conscripted soldiers during the Second World War and was built to a standard which was intended to last the duration of that conflict. Subsequent to the end of the war the camp was used for a variety of military purposes and was latterly used as a training facility for the Medical Corps. As a result many of the surviving buildings (other than the residential element of the camp) have undergone several episodes of change of use and will have almost certainly been internally modified to accommodate these changes. A far greater number of the original buildings of the camp have been demolished within the last forty years or so, probably as a result of a combination of reaching the end of their useful life and the declining need for a high density training installation in this part of the country.
- 4.33 The earliest air photographs of the area, dating to 1947 (Plate 1), record the camp at its near maximum extents, the only major elements absent at this time being the married quarters and officers' houses now situated at the northern extremity of the site. The village of Huntington, to the north of the camp, was also under construction during this period and this comprised a ribbon development fronting the B1530. Apart from the village, the camp was otherwise surrounded by fields containing the upstanding remains of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation. The open spaces within the camp do not appear to contain any remains of this nature suggesting that the original ground surfaces within the camp had been levelled either by ground reduction works or by infilling during its construction.
- 4.34 The camp originally contained four distinct complexes of buildings arranged around two large open areas identified as parade and training grounds in later cartographic sources (Fig 3). The arrangement and alignment of the individual building groups is not consistent and they appear to have been laid out in patterns which reflect the positions of former field boundaries rather than as a single planned entity. It is therefore possible the arrangement of the building groups is indicative of the chronology of the construction of the camp which may have been built on a field-by-field basis as the camp expanded through time. There are also gaps in the layout of the camp which reflect the positions of some of the former marl pits present within the boundaries of the camp (Fig 4).

Some indications as to the functions of the various buildings is evident in an undated Ministry of Defence (MoD) plan of the site which was made prior to the construction of the married quarters and officers' houses to the north of the complex. The buildings are not named in this plan, but all are numbered in a scheme that seems to reflect the function of the buildings i.e. all buildings with the same function bear the same number (Figure 3).

- 4.35 There are three main building types present within the complex; rectangular and sub-rectangular buildings in a variety of sizes (Plate 2); buildings constructed as two parallel rectangular blocks of differing lengths joined by a short block arranged perpendicularly to these resulting in an asymmetrical H shape (Plate 3) and buildings comprising seven rectangular blocks joined by corridors resulting in a building plan resembling a stylised insect (Plate 4). The former type of building, 12 of which bear the same number in the MoD, plan appear to have originally been officers' quarters and the latter building type, of which there were a total of 19, probably all represent barrack blocks. Three kitchen and refectory buildings are evident, apparently catering for three distinct groups of barracks. The rectangular buildings were clearly used for a variety of purposes but several building types are replicated in different parts of the camp. The north-western section of the site, now containing the officers' and married quarters, was originally occupied only by two small buildings and something that appears to have been a small firearms range.
- 4.36 Cartographic evidence from 1954 suggests that the camp had undergone little change in the intervening years. The level of detail depicted in the Ordnance Survey map of that year is poor but it would seem that one of the two small buildings in the northernmost area of the site had fallen out of use by this time. Several other small structures in the south centre of the complex had also been abandoned and no new structures are apparent.
- 4.37 The officers' and married quarters were built at the northern margins of the camp some time between 1954 and 1962. The officers' houses (Plate 5) comprised substantial detached properties built as a single crescent whereas the married quarters (Plate 6) were built as two streets of opposing semi-detached houses some distance to the west. These houses were separated from the officers' quarters by an area of open grassland and a single ditch running along the line of a field boundary depicted on the Ordnance Survey map of 1881. The second of the small buildings that previously existed in this area had been demolished to facilitate the construction of the officers' houses. A small sewage treatment works, situated at the extreme northern limits of the camp, had also been constructed by 1962.
- 4.38 The camp had attained its maximum extents by 1962 and subsequent cartographic and photographic material catalogues its subsequent decline. Ordnance Survey mapping dating to 1968 indicates that one of the barrack blocks located in the south-eastern extremity of the camp had been demolished as had one of the H-blocks near its centre. In addition, several rectangular blocks in the northern part of the camp had also been demolished. The parade ground situated to the west of the camp had undergone a change of use and is identified as being tennis courts at that time.

- 4.39 Air photography from 1970 indicates that a further H-block had been demolished and more of the rectangular buildings in the northern and eastern sectors of the camp, in particular an entire group of six on the southern margins of the training ground. A single medium sized building, situated near the southern extremity of the site and aligned at an angle to every other building, had also been demolished by this time. However three groups of bunkers are visible in these photographs. The first of these comprising eight or nine individual bunkers are located to the east of the parade ground and are arranged in a seemingly random pattern. A further group of nine bunkers, arranged in neat groups of two and three, are situated adjacent to a cluster of barrack blocks in the south-centre of the camp and a group of ten bunkers are apparent at the south-eastern extremities of the camp situated immediately to the north of the moated site, just inside the perimeter fence of the camp (Plate 7).
- 4.40 A similar situation is depicted in air photographs of 1971, the only changes being represented by the demolition of a number of small rectangular buildings in various parts of the camp.
- 4.41 Cartographic evidence dated to 1982 suggests that a considerable reduction in the number of buildings present at the camp had taken place. A further five of the barrack blocks in the south-eastern margins of the camp had been demolished along with three more north of the former parade ground. Several more of the rectangular structures situated in the north-eastern area of the site had also been removed as had several in the centre and south-centre of the site.
- 4.42 By 1985 the village of Huntington had undergone expansion to the east of the B5130 and the A55(T) by-pass had been constructed. However a large quantity of upstanding ridge and furrow cultivation remains still survived within the surrounding landscape and this is evident in air photographs taken at this time. The number of buildings within the camp had also been further reduced by the demolition of more rectangular buildings in various locations within the camp. The number of barrack and H-blocks remained unchanged.
- 4.43 Air photographs taken in 1993 documents the continued reduction in the military importance of the camp. In June of that year the vast majority of the easternmost third of the camp had been dismantled but the former training ground and road infrastructure are still clearly visible. However, by October of the same year this area appears to be substantially overgrown (Plate 8). A small swept-wing aircraft, possibly a Hawker Hunter, is also shown, this being parked in the open near the site of one of the former buildings in the north-eastern section of the site. All but five of the barrack blocks and six of the H-blocks had been demolished and substantial reductions in the number of rectangular buildings had been made.
- 4.44 By 1999 only three structures survived within the easternmost third of the camp. These comprise two substantial rectangular buildings fronting the training ground (Plate 9) and a smaller building with an associated chimney-stack situated to the north of these (Plate 10). This latter structure is identified as being a Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) chamber on a survey plan of the camp dated to 1997. Aside from these very little change in the layout of the

camp is evident. The site has now been abandoned by the military and was, up until recently, used periodically by a variety of fire brigades and police forces for training purposes.

- 4.45 A site inspection survey undertaken in early April 2005 revealed few further alterations to the layout of the camp. The majority of the original non-residential buildings still present within the camp are timber framed structures, clad in timber and supported by brick foundations courses. Some of these are in reasonable condition, externally at least, having been maintained until relatively recently, others are deteriorating. The original timber cladding of the buildings comprising the hospital complex has been replaced by outer skins of breeze-block and some form of corrugated sheeting, possibly asbestos. The two larger buildings within the eastern part of the site are brick-built apart from their gable walls which are also clad in corrugated sheeting. The NBC chamber is built of brick of at least three different types and sizes and is partially rendered. These buildings are all in a dilapidated condition. The infrastructure for the majority of the area of the camp remains *in situ* but is severely deteriorated in the eastern section of the camp. The concrete road surfaces in this area are crumbling and the surface of the parade ground is in poor condition.
- 4.46 The officers' houses are substantial, detached, pseudo-grandiose, brick-built structures situated within small individual garden plots. Each house is architecturally slightly different to its neighbours and most are equipped with garages. By contrast, the married quarters are unattractive, utilitarian, semi-detached properties clad in cement rendering and painted in a variety of insipid creamy colours. Each house has a small garden plot and there are large communal grassed areas within the complex. Both classes of housing are in reasonable condition externally and are typical examples of residential military buildings of this period and are considered to represent relatively unspectacular examples of a post-war architectural tradition.

Potential for the survival of unrecorded archaeological remains

Prehistoric and Roman

- 4.47 The site inspection confirmed that the camp as a whole has undergone a substantial level of ground disturbance. Aside from a gully separating the easternmost third of the camp from the remainder, the entire area appears to have been subjected to ground levelling by both reduction and infilling. A large number of underground structures such as fuel tanks, air-raid shelters and ordnance bunkers were also noted throughout the camp and there is considerable evidence for other ground disturbance works for drainage and sewerage. A high level of ground disturbance is also recorded in the results of a programme of trial pit survey undertaken by Cooper Associates (2005) for Bovis Homes Ltd between 2003 and 2005. A series of pits excavated near the southern perimeter of the camp and in the area of the training ground suggest that much of the original ground surface in this area has been subjected to some form of intervention. The majority of the trial pit logs for this area of the site record made ground or recent fill deposits directly overlying clay. In the most extreme

case, in the vicinity of one of the former marl pits, modern fill was encountered to a depth of 2.2m.

- 4.48 Given the high level of ground disturbance throughout the site and the lack of evidence for either prehistoric or Roman remains within study area, it is considered that the potential for unrecorded archaeological remains of these periods to be present within the development boundary is very low.

Medieval

- 4.49 The proposed development site lies within an area which was once predominantly concerned with agriculture. Air photographs taken in 1947 depict landscape almost entirely covered in extant ridge and furrow, probably attributable to the medieval period, and it would not be unreasonable to assume that the plot of land occupied by the camp was essentially similar prior to its construction. However all traces of upstanding ridge and furrow appear to have been removed from within the curtilage of the camp by 1947 and no unequivocal examples of this form of agriculture were identified during the site inspection. As a result of extensive ground levelling works undertaken during the construction of the camp it is considered that there is little potential for the survival of intact features or deposits attributable to the medieval period within the majority of area of the proposed development. Any deposits relating to this period that do survive are likely to be fragmentary and distributed randomly around the camp therefore limiting meaningful interpretation.

Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefield sites and Historic Hedgerows

- 4.50 There are no Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens or Battlefield sites or Historic Hedgerows directly within the curtilage of the former training camp. The nearest Scheduled Monuments to Saighton Camp comprise the complex of features associated with Huntington Hall (Sites 10 to 13) situated approximately 1.3km to the south-west of the camp. A single Listed farm complex at Grange Farm (Site 19) lies approximately 1.5km to the south of the site. The nearest Conservation Areas to the proposed development are situated at Handbridge and Dee Banks, both approximately 1.5km to the north-west and Rowton and Christleton which are both less than 1.5km to the east. The nearest Registered Park and Garden is that associated with Eaton Hall (SJ 4145 6080) and its associated approach avenues which, with the exception of a ribbon along the line of the Buerton and Waverton Approaches, is predominantly situated on the west bank of the River Dee. The nearest Registered Battlefield Site is the Civil War site at Rowton Moor (centred on SJ 4480 6430) situated approximately 1.5km to the east of the proposed development site. There is only one surviving boundary within the camp that lies along the line of a boundary depicted in the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1872. The boundary now comprises a ditch and hedgerow though the form of the boundary in 1872 is uncertain. This hedgerow does not qualify as being of archaeological or historical importance under *The Hedgerow Regulations 1997* Schedule 1 Part II as amended by DEFRA in 2002.

5.0 DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

- 5.1 At present the precise location, nature and extent of the proposed development has not been clearly defined. It is anticipated that the proposed scheme will involve groundworks, including the demolition of existing structures, ground levelling works, the construction of a new road and sewerage infrastructure and the cutting of foundation and service trenches, initially only within the area currently occupied by the married quarters and officers' houses.

6.0 DEVELOPMENT IMPACT

Prehistoric and Roman

- 6.1 There is no evidence to suggest that there will be any impact on prehistoric or Roman archaeological remains within the proposed development area. The only recorded archaeological remains within the boundaries of the site is a chance find of a stray Roman coin (Site 5) which is not considered to be indicative of further remains of this period and the potential for unrecorded archaeological remains of either prehistoric or Roman date is considered very low, particularly given the high level of ground disturbance associated with the former military camp.

Medieval moat (Site 14)

- 6.2 The only extant archaeological site that could be potentially affected by the proposed development is the medieval moat situated immediately to the south east of the camp (Site 14). The moat has been partially damaged and whilst it has not been designated a Scheduled Monument, it is considered to be of regional importance and of medium sensitivity. Although the ditch and platform of the moat lies entirely beyond the limits of the camp and would not be directly affected by groundworks, it is possible given the nature of this site type, that some associated external ancillary features and/or structures may have extended into the area beyond the perimeter fence of the camp.
- 6.3 The part of the camp where such features might once have existed contained a number of barrack blocks up until their demolition prior to 1982. Given the density of former barrack blocks it would not be unreasonable to assume that much of the original ground surface in this area would have been levelled and otherwise disturbed during the construction of these buildings and their associated services. In addition, the area of the camp in closest proximity to the moat now contains a number of disused underground bunkers or shelters, these now consisting of buried concrete pipes. These are inconsistent with a construction date in the late 1930s and may be replacements for brick-built predecessors similar to those surviving in other areas of the camp. Two geotechnical trial pits excavated in this area revealed modern fill deposits to depths of 0.8m and 1.3m. In both cases these deposits overlay very stiff reddish brown clay with no evidence of intervening stratigraphy which might represent ancient buried soil horizons (Cooper Associates 2005).
- 6.4 Given the high level of disturbance within the site perimeter adjacent to the medieval moat, it is considered that there is very little potential for well-

preserved medieval deposits to have survived within this area. The likely magnitude of impact in terms of loss of archaeological remains is therefore considered to be slight or negligible and easily mitigated through a programme of archaeological monitoring. Taking into account this mitigation, the significance of impact is considered negligible.

- 6.5 In terms of the impact on the setting of this site, whilst the magnitude of impact of the proposed development on the current environs of the moat is likely to be substantial and result in considerable change to the immediate landscape, given the semi-derelict condition of the camp in this area, the significance of this impact on the setting of the site is considered to be moderate to minor adverse. Mitigation through sympathetic development design and landscaping could remedy any adverse impact and possibly result in a minor to moderate benefit to the setting.

Post-medieval features

- 6.6 A number of features attributable to the post-medieval period once existed within the proposed development area including a series of former marl or clay extraction pits, a track and field boundaries. The majority of the former marl pits were in-filled during the construction of the camp and all but one of the former field boundaries removed. The former track was replaced by the road serving the married quarters and officers' houses. The only features attributable to this period which may survive within the proposed development area are the in-filled remains of former marl pits, none of which are currently visible. The degree of preservation of such remains is likely to be poor and much better preserved examples survive within the immediate vicinity of the camp. The sensitivity of these features is considered low. Whilst the magnitude of the impact of groundworks associated with the development upon these remains is likely to be substantial, the significance of this impact is considered negligible.

Saighton Military Training Camp

- 6.7 It is anticipated that the proposed development will involve the demolition of all surviving structures, the removal of all of the existing site infrastructure and substantial groundworks necessitated for the removal of any contaminated ground and associated with new construction works. The magnitude of the impact of the proposed development upon features associated with the construction and use of Saighton Camp will therefore be substantial, however, for reasons discussed below the significance of this impact is considered moderate to minor.
- 6.8 An assessment of significance of impact is based on a combined assessment of site sensitivity and magnitude of impact. The sensitivity of the site is the importance of the site based on statutory designations. Saighton Camp is not scheduled nor are any of the buildings within its perimeter listed. The site is not recorded as an archaeological site in either the National Monuments Record or the Cheshire County Historic Environment Record. Military training camps are, however, considered to be of archaeological interest and are the subject of ongoing assessment as part of the English Heritage Monument Protection Programme (MPP). Saighton Camp is listed in the gazetteer of sites produced as part of Stage 1 of this project for the North Western district and English Heritage

have recently commissioned Stage 2 of this work which will determine modern survival, rarity and significance of all sites listed in this gazetteer. Until the MPP Stage 2 has been completed there is no published criteria for assessing the archaeological importance of Saughton Camp and for the purposes of this report, assessment of importance can only be made on the basis of professional judgement taking into account English Heritage's advice on the recording, management and conservation of twentieth-century military sites (English Heritage 1998 and 2003) and a combination of the criteria provided in PPG16 (Annex 4) for scheduling and PPG15 (para. 6.10) for listing.

- 6.9 The degree of the site's completeness and rarity is fundamental to the significance of any twentieth century military site (English Heritage 2003, 11) and Saughton Camp can only be seen as a relatively incomplete example of a number of such institutions built throughout England in response to the threat of war in the late 1930s.
- 6.10 The camp was originally built in the late 1930s and had reached its maximum extents by 1962. Thereafter the number of buildings present within the complex began to decline. A significant proportion of the buildings once present on the camp had been demolished between 1971 and 1982 and by 1999 their numbers had been reduced by approximately three-quarters. Since 1999 there does not appear to have been any further significant reduction in the number of buildings
- 6.11 In terms of survival, at least one example of the three main building categories still exist and the foundation levels of many of the demolished buildings are still visible in certain areas of camp. The condition of the buildings is variable, some have been reasonable well maintained and are in reasonable external condition, others are deteriorating. The married quarters and officers' houses are still extant and though in reasonable condition are beginning to deteriorate. Much of the camp's road network survives intact although in poor condition in the eastern half of the site, and the surfaces of both the former parade ground and training ground are largely *in situ*. The site is no longer being maintained by the military and it is anticipated that in the absence of the proposed redevelopment, it is likely to gradually fall into further dereliction.
- 6.12 It is considered that none of the surviving buildings are likely to be of sufficient architectural or historic importance to warrant listing. Given the site's general poor level of survival and condition, it is also considered unlikely that the site would meet the threshold criteria for scheduling and is probably of local archaeological and historic importance and of low sensitivity. It is recognised, however, that this assessment of importance may need to be revised, if the MPP Stage 2 assessment demonstrates that when compared to other training camps either at a regional and national level, Saughton scores above average either in terms survival or condition. On the basis of existing evidence, it is considered that despite the substantial magnitude of impact, the significance of the effects of the proposed development on Saughton military training camp are moderate to minor but with the potential for beneficial mitigation.

Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens and Registered Battlefield sites

- 6.13 Given that the extent and character of the proposed development has not been clearly defined at this stage it is difficult to predict the potential impacts that the development may have upon the setting of the Scheduled Monuments at Huntington Hall (Sites 10 to 13), the Listed Buildings at Grange Farm (Site 19), the Conservation Areas at Handbridge, Dee Banks, Rowton and Christleton, the Registered Park and Garden associated with Eaton Hall and the Registered Battlefield site at Rowton Moor.
- 6.14 These sites are of national importance and high sensitivity. Saighton Camp is situated within a gently rolling landscape and it is possible that there will be some level of intervisibility between the proposed development site and some of these sites and therefore issues of setting may arise. Detailed development design should aim to avoid any significant adverse impact on these sites and this issue will need to be assessed in detail once the character of the proposed development has been clarified.

7.0 MITIGATION

Medieval moat (Site 14)

- 7.1 There is some small potential to encounter deposits and features relating to the occupation of the moated site within the southeast corner of the camp, although any medieval deposits within this area are likely to have been destroyed or badly compromised by ground disturbance associated with former construction activities within the camp perimeter.
- 7.2 In order to mitigate this potential impact, it is recommended that all ground reduction operations and trenching within 50m of the boundary of the moated site should be undertaken under the direct supervision of a monitoring archaeologist in order to identify, excavate and record any surviving archaeological remains that might be exposed during these works. Provision should be made for the monitoring archaeologist to have sufficient time and resources to adequately investigate and record any archaeological deposits or features encountered during the watching brief phase.
- 7.3 Adverse impact on the setting of this monument should be reduced or avoided by sympathetic development design and landscaping within this southeast corner and if possible the proposed development should aim to enhance the existing setting and character of this regionally important site.

Saighton Military Training Camp

- 7.4 Construction works necessitated by the proposed development will involve the demolition of all surviving buildings, and will destroy or severely compromise the remains of the infrastructure and other subsurface remains associated with the former army training camp. The following mitigation strategies are therefore recommended:

- Further documentary research should be undertaken in order to identify the range of the military activities undertaken at the camp and to elucidate any changes in its function through time
- A brief photographic record and supporting written description should be made of a representative sample of both the married quarters and officers' houses located within the northern part of the site. This should aim to supplement the existing cartographic and photographic archive and effect their preservation by record.
- In order to supplement the existing cartographic and photographic evidence for the development and demolition of the buildings in the remainder of the camp, at least one example of each type of surviving 1930's buildings and structures, should be recorded through detailed external photographic record and brief descriptive record (to RCHME level 2). The aim should be to better preserve these structures by record prior to their demolition.
- In order to record constructional detail currently obscured by post-war and recent fixtures and fittings, a brief photographic and written record of at least one of each of the original building types should also be made as the buildings are being demolished. This should also include details of the roof structure, the foundation platform and wall construction.

7.5 Prior to the development commencing, detailed project designs for both the archaeological monitoring and building recording should be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Archaeological Officer of Chester City Council. All archaeological works and building recording should be undertaken in accordance with all relevant standards and guidance published by English Heritage, the Institute of Field Archaeologists and the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME). All archaeological fieldwork and building recording should be subject to post-excavation assessment, analysis and reporting. If warranted, the results of the work should also be published in an appropriate journal. Subject to landowner agreement, any finds and archives arising out of the archaeological works should be deposited with Chester City Museum. Copies of all reports should be deposited with Chester City Council, Cheshire County Council Historic Environment Section, and English Heritage.

8.0 RESIDUAL IMPACTS

- 8.1 The proposed development has the potential for a residual adverse impact on the setting of the medieval moated site outside the southeast perimeter of the development boundary. However, subject to appropriate development design and landscaping, the residual impact should be reduced to a minimum to negligible and if possible, it should aim to result in a minor to moderate improvement to the existing setting which is currently compromised by the derelict state of the camp.
- 8.2 The proposed development will result in the permanent loss of Saighton military training camp. Whilst the magnitude of impact on this site is substantial, the site is of only local importance and unlikely to be subject to statutory protection. The loss of the site and demolition of the buildings would in part be compensated for

by further documentary research and building recording, thus guaranteeing that the historic interest of the site is preserved by record for future generations. Given that in the absence of development, the site is likely to continue to deteriorate without record, it is considered that taking into account the proposed mitigation, the significance of the residual effects of this impact is minor to negligible.

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Frames 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 4027, 4028, 4029 and 4030
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Frames 1 908 7013, 1 909 7013 and 1 910 7013.

1971 Hunting Surveys Ltd
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1985 J A Story and Partners
Run 7, frames 2685 052, 2685 053, 2685 054 and 2685 055.
Run 8, frames 2685 082 and 2685 083.

1993 Geonix
Line 10 (June) frames 131 93/055, 131 93/056.
Line 10 (October) frames 131 6293/221, 131 6293/222, 131 6293/223 and 131 6293.224.

APPENDIX 1

Archaeological sites recorded within the study area

<i>Site Number</i>	<i>Reference Number</i>	<i>Grid Reference</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Period/Date</i>	<i>Grade</i>
1	NMR SJ46NW1	SJ 4100 6500	Findspot	Prehistoric	3
2	NMR SJ46NW4	SJ 4100 6500	Findspot	Prehistoric	3
3	CHER 1940/0/1	SJ 4400 6400	Findspot	Roman	3
4	CHER 1940/0/2	SJ 3400 6400	Findspot	Roman	3
5	CHER 1943	SJ 4275 6400	Findspot	Roman	3
6	CHER 2777/0/1	SJ 4210 6300	Findspot	Roman	3
7	CHER 2777/0/2	SJ 4210 6300	Findspot	Roman	3
8	NMR SJ46SW48	SJ 4211 6320	Deer Park	Medieval	2
9	NMR SJ46NW90	SJ 4200 6500	Settlement	Medieval	2
10	CHER 1944/1/1	SJ 4197 6347	Manor	Medieval	SM
11	CHER 1944/1/2	SJ 4190 6341	Moat	Medieval	SM
12	CHER 1944/1/3	SJ 4204 6347	Bridge	Medieval	SM
13	CHER 1944/1/4	SJ 4190 6345	Fishponds	Medieval	SM
14	CHER 1946	SJ 4326 6406	Moat	Medieval	1
15		SJ 4374 6552	Canal	Post-medieval	2
16	Linear 783	SJ 4316 6452	River	Post-medieval	2
17		SJ 4405 6458	Railway	Post-medieval	3
18		SJ 4273 6496	Brickworks	Post-medieval	3
19	CHER 1947/1	SJ 4240 6278	Farm complex	Post-medieval	LBII
20	CHER 2782	SJ 4210 6300	Findspot	Unknown	3

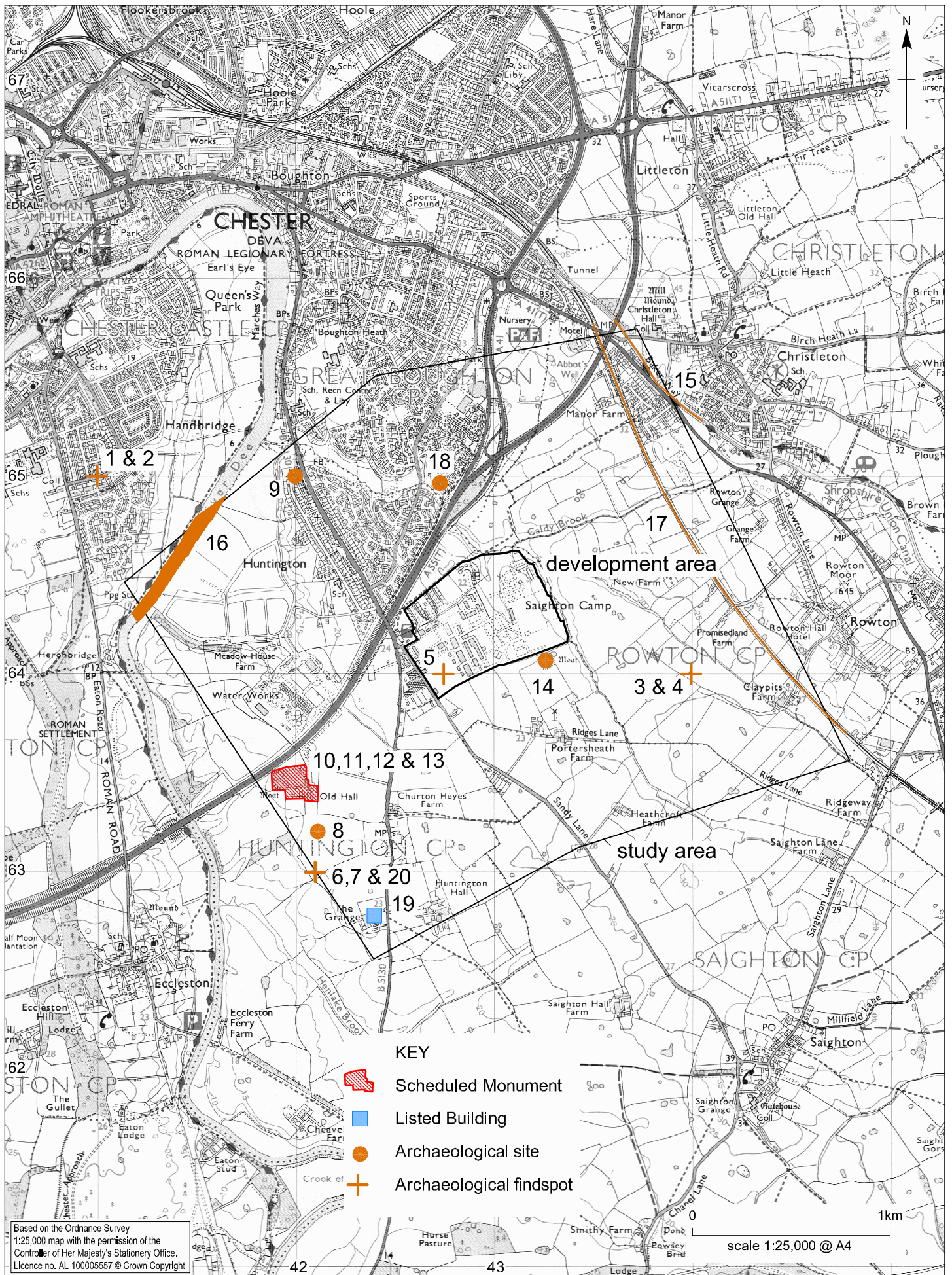


Figure 2 Saighton Camp: cultural heritage sites within the vicinity



Figure 3 Saighton Camp: schematic camp plan from c.1939 to present of original functions where known



Figure 4 Saighton Camp: development of camp



Plate 1 Saughton Camp: air photograph from 1947



Plate 2 Saughton Camp: rectangular building, possibly gymnasium



Plate 3 Saighton Camp: officers quarters



Plate 4 Saighton Camp: barrack block with brick-built bunker in foreground



Plate 5 Saughton Camp: officers house



Plate 6 Saughton Camp: married quarters



Plate 7 Saughton Camp: view of moated site with concrete bunkers in foreground



Plate 8 Saughton Camp: air photograph from 1993



Plate 9 Saughton Camp: training ground with two rectangular structures in background



Plate 10 Saughton Camp: NBC chamber