

**Site Name:** Derby Racecourse Roman vicus & cemetery  
**Parish:** Derby  
**National Grid Ref:** SK 3624 3752  
**Specific Period:** Romano-British  
**Form:** Finds include pottery, metalworking  
**Event Type:** Part Excavation  
**National Monument No:** 13236

### **A Description of the Monument:**

Located c.600m east of the Roman fort at Little Chester (Derwentio), the site is a vicus, or small civilian settlement, situated on the Roman road from Little Chester to the Trent at Sawley. Excavations carried out on part of the site between 1968 and 1974 have revealed it to be a Roman industrial settlement, specialising originally in pottery and later in metal working, with an associated cemetery. Pottery production indicates that industrial activity began with the settlement's creation AD90 and lasted until the mid-second century when metal working took over as the most important industrial activity. This continued until the settlement's decline in the mid-fourth century. The latter period of occupation, from the second to the fourth centuries, is reflected in the area of the cemetery excavated. This revealed a line of five mausolea near the Roman road and an open cemetery to the north with both cremation and inhumation burials, three of which contained military dress-fittings. An area of a walled cemetery containing a mixture of inhumations and cremations was also located slightly further north of the main complex. The modern goalposts within the scheduled area are excluded from the scheduling.

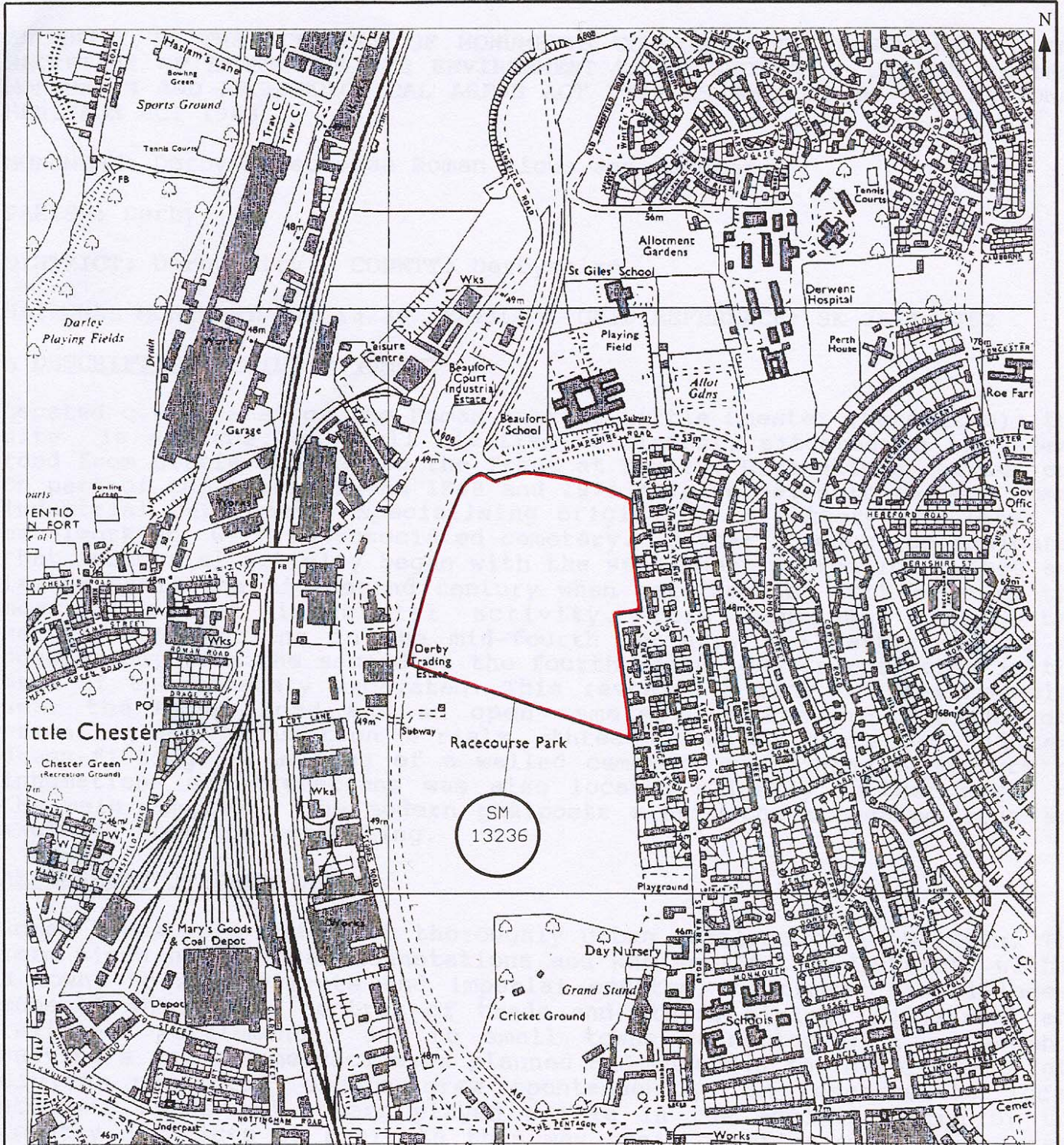
### **Assessment of Importance:**

Roman towns were the first thoroughly urban settlements in Britain. The term vicus had several connotations and was applied to districts within a town, to some private and imperial estates, to commercial villages, some of which were centres of trade and others mining, industrial and religious settlements, and to small towns connected with or somehow serving a fort. Some vici were planned and intended for development into civitas capitals, others grew spontaneously in response to local economic needs and others played a role in the administration of the country districts or pagi. In this way their creation was an important step in the Romanisation of Britain since they were a mark of the native population's acceptance of town-based life, which was itself central to Roman government and administration.

The Derby Racecourse site is an important example of a fort-vicus, an extramural civilian settlement attached to the nearby fort of Derwentio at Little Chester. Fort-vici are rare nationally, with less than sixty identified examples, and are situated almost exclusively in frontier regions where conditions were not secure enough for fully-fledged towns to develop. They were important centres in which people settled in order to provide goods and services to the moneyed Roman troops.

The Derby Racecourse site has been identified as one of only two well preserved vici in Derbyshire and has a very rich associated Roman cemetery which has already yielded considerable evidence of the size, age range, sex and wealth of the population associated with the vicus and fort. The previous excavations at the site have been limited and the site is of considerable archaeological potential.

# Scheduled Monument



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For identification purposes only

Site Name: Derby Racecourse Roman vicus & cemetery

County: Derbyshire	District: Derby City	Parish: Derby
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Notes: For excluded areas, see text record

Key: Monument No.      Location/extent of site



Scale: 1:10000      Derived from: 1:10000

Centred on NGR: SK36243752

Extract from OS sheet: SK33NE

Date: 5.11.90

Monument No: SM13236

English Heritage

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