Alnwick and its fringe belts

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**Abstract** (250 words)

In his analysis of Alnwick’s town plan, M.R.G. Conzen does not consider the morphological phases of the prehistoric and Roman ages, maintaining that ‘Alnwick began its existence relatively late in the Anglian period of Northumberland, possibly sometime in the seventh century’ (Conzen, 1968). We have endeavoured to bridge this gap with some hypotheses on towns’ and territory’s formative processes, taking into account the fact that, generally speaking, the first plan’s processes leave imprints of permanent substratum structural signs which conditioned the town’s subsequent transformations, remaining ‘inscribed’ as a sort of DNA in its urban form. In the absence of archaeological evidence, the confidence that we can may place in inferences is dependent on the degree of congruence with subsequent urban transformations. According to the ridge -theory (Kropf, 1993) the first groups of human beings, in their search for food, tended to follow watersheds. These paths offer walkers numerous advantages: they do not sink in the mud, they do not require bridges and they enable bearings from higher grounds. As for the incidence of Roman planning, metrological checks on formation process hypotheses, conducted on the Ordnance Survey’s excellent map of Roman Britain, could open up new research on the territorial studies of Great Britain in Roman times.

**References** (100 words)

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