

(i) Caerwent - 2017

Photograph F on paper X shows the plan of Caerwent.

(a) Identify the features shown at aa, b, c, f, and g.

- aa. Decumanus maximus
- b. Forum
- c. Basilica
- f. Amphitheatre
- g. Inner ditch

(b) Describe the forum and explain how it differed from a typical Roman form in Italy.

Caerwent's forum was that of a typical forum in Roman Britain. The forum was wide rather than long and served as a popular meeting place and marketplace for the town. On entering, one could see the arch entrance opposing the Pacifica which stretched the width of the forum. While inside the forum, one could see that it was very widespread with an open market. Roofed porticos and shops surrounded the forum on three sides, with the basilica on the 4th. There was a shrine on the western side of the forum.

The basilica was 176 feet long, had two aisles and had rectangular alcoves at each end which served judicial purposes. Behind the basilica was a range of six offices which were municipal offices. The basilica and municipal offices were where administration and other government dealings were done.

As for differences between it and a typical Roman forum, its shape was one. Instead of being a long rectangular forum the forum of Caerwent was square in size. It also had an arched, roofed entrance which was unusual. The forum is also surrounded by plain roofed shops. This is different from a typical Roman form which would have been surrounded by a colonnade. Comparing

Caerwent's forum to one of a town such as Ostia in Italy, it clearly has the typical rectangular forum with a colonnade surrounding it.

As for its buildings, the basilica in Caerwent takes up the entire North end of the forum, rather than a small part of it. In Pompeii for example, the basilica is located along the side of the forum with other areas such as the marketplace and temples. Unlike a typical Roman forum (the one in Pompeii) there is also no temples in Caerwent's forum. The main Romano Celtic temple is beside it rather than inside the forum itself.

(c) Explain what Wheeler means when he writes that Caerwent “was... part of civil, not military strategy”

What Wheeler means by this is that Caerwent served another purpose as opposed to a military one. It was originally named Venta Silurum and was built only seven miles behind the frontier fortress of the second Augustine legion, the Fort of Caerleon. There was no need for another military town.

The town of Caerwent never rose above more than a country town it was mainly a center of Romanization. The locals were encouraged in the ways of the Romans. The town had more orderliness and casualness than what would be typical of a military town such as Aosta. It was not in a grid pattern and there was more leisure in the town than military purpose. For example, the baths and the amphitheatre indicate a fondness for pleasure and entertainment.