

3.0

Historical Development

'The challenge of history is not whether or not it should be studied, but rather the interpretation of what is constant and therefore alive today, and what is ephemeral and only academic'.

Geoffrey Jellicoe, The Landscape of Man - shaping the environment from prehistory to the present day; 1987.

3.1 Summary of Historical Development

There is an extensive history to the Castle Park site which goes back to the Roman times. Howard Brooks report 'A Historical Survey of Castle Park' (1997) provides a comprehensive study of the main events that shaped development and the use of the area now occupied by Castle Park. There is a significant overlay of phases of development, the Roman Town, Norman ramparts with the largest Norman Keep in Europe, Gray's pleasure grounds and the Public Park, which was eventually founded after many years of opposition. A summary of the historic development of the park is provided below:

Roman Period

- AD43 Roman Conquest - Fortress built at Colchester (Camulodunum).
- Fort converted to a colony after conquest of lowland Britain substantially complete.
- Camulodunum became the capital city of Britain.
- A temple to Emperor Claudius was erected east of the fortress.
- The city was sacked by Boudica in AD60/61 and London became the provincial capital. Camulodunum dropped out of mainstream history.

Castle Park stands over the north east part of the former Roman colony and includes the site of the Temple (now under the Norman Castle). Parts of the Town Wall, Duncan's Gate, drains and many Roman streets are also within the Castle Park boundaries.

Saxon Period

- Least well represented period in the Park.
- Saxon Burials have been found in Upper and Lower areas of Castle Park.
- Evidence suggests the Saxons used and adapted the Roman Temple as a church. The Bailey Chapel, still visible in front of the Castle today, could also be from this period.

Medieval Period

- Colchester remained the largest and principal town of Essex through the Middle Ages.
- The Castle was built in 1076 for William I (The Conqueror) on the ruins of the Roman Temple.
- The threat of invasion from Denmark called for strengthened defences. A bailey, formed by an earth bank and probably topped by a palisade, had been built by 1100.
- The building of the Castle including the Ditch and rampart construction represents the second massive change in ground level in the Park since the levelling of the ground for the construction of the Roman Temple.
- A Corn Mill was constructed on Lower Castle Park on the River Colne in about 1100. The site of the mill is still visible today.
- Henry III stayed in the Castle in 1242.
- In the later 13th Century the Castle was the Seat of the Sheriff of Essex, and contained the County Gaol until the 17th century.

16th to 18th Centuries

- The Castle fell into decay between the 15th and 17th Centuries. All the bailey buildings, with the exception of part of one in the south east corner, had disappeared by 1622. John Speed's map of 1610 (Figure HLD1) gives no indication of the nature of the terrain surrounding the Castle.

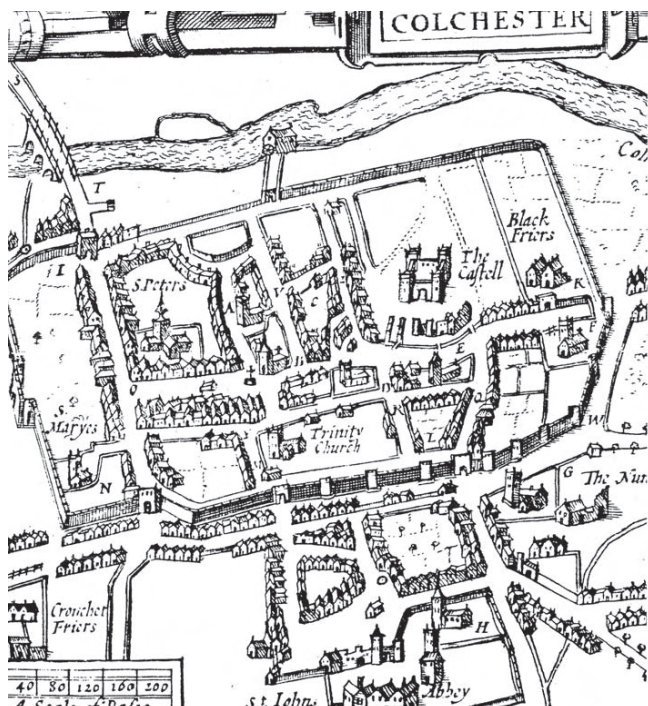


Figure HLD1
John Speed map of c.1610

- A plan made in 1709 (Figure HLD2) shows a bowling green south of the Castle Keep which means considerable levelling works must have been done to render the bailey suitable for bowls.
- In 1718 a house called Hollytrees was built to the east of the Castle.
- In 1726 the Castle was left to Charles Chamberlain Rebow by his grandfather Sir Issac Rebow. Mary Webster purchased the Castle and also the bailey grounds from him a year later. The land was then conferred to her daughter Sarah who was married to Charles Gray.

19th Century

- Charles Gray had grand designs for the area. OS map 1876 (Figure HLD3) shows Gray's implemented layout. (See section below for detailed development).
- Charles Gray died in 1782 and the land was inherited by the Round family.

Development of Castle Park as a Public Park

- In 1870 John Joslin submitted proposals for a public park to the trustees of Charles Gray Round. Initial negotiations were unsuccessful.
- By 1892 most arrangements had finally been agreed for the area to become a public park. It was opened by the Lord Mayor of London on 20th October 1892, coinciding with the local ancient traditional Oyster Feast.
- The council employed a professional landscape firm Messrs. Backhouse and Co. to make the changes they felt necessary for the area to become a public park. This was implemented between 1892 -96.
- In 1893 the land north of the Colne was bequeathed as a direct extension to the Park or an area which could be leased to fund the Park.
- In 1907 two more parcels of land adjacent to the land north of the Colne were gifted to the Park.
- Between 1920 and 1922 the Council purchased the Castle, Hollytrees House and Gardens from the Round Trustees.
- In 1979 the Riverside Walk was formed on adopted land.

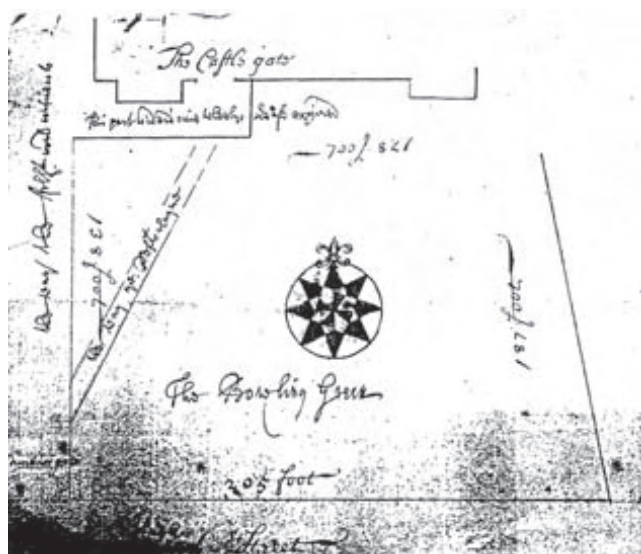


Figure HLD2
Plan of disused right of way
across bowling green in 1709

A more detailed summary of the history of the Park is presented in Appendix 3A and a timeline outlining the key events is presented at the end of this section.

19th and 20th Centuries

OS1876 (Figure HLD3)



Figure HLD3
1st edition OS 1876

This survey (Figure HLD3) provides a very good image of the grounds to Hollytrees and areas surrounding the Castle. The area covered is largely the same as the Morant and Sparrow maps, however, the detail is clearer and provides a much stronger sense of Gray's design.

A fence divides areas to the western and southern sides of the Castle. It is possible that the southern area was for public use as it is traversed by paths and planted with mature trees. A fence to the north of the Castle precludes entry to the northern and eastern aspects of the Castle. The northern

rampart of the Castle is levelled to provide a terraced path curving from the west to the east.

The Rotunda and the Summerhouse can be seen and a path leads down to the lawn of Hollytrees and on to the house.

A more detailed analysis of this survey is documented in Section 3.2 Detailed Historical Development.

OS1897 (Figure HLD4)

This survey (Figure HLD4) was carried out five years after Castle Park was laid out. The entrance from the High Street was provided via gates from the newly named Museum Street. The grounds south of the Castle were open, a narrow structure having been demolished, with paths leading visitors around the entire building. At the north end of the building an obelisk is located to the side of the main path. On the



Figure HLD4
2nd Edition OS 1897 76

west side of the Castle a serpentine path runs close to the straight path the earthwork shown on the 1876 OS having been removed. On reaching the northern tip of the north rampart the path divides to lead east, past a bandstand, along Catchpool Avenue to the Pavilion. Alternatively the visitor could go north into the Lower Park which is divided by the Town Wall. A diagonal path crosses the field north of the Bandstand. On both east and west perimeters winding paths travel through woodland and shrubberies.

Crossing the Town Wall by the Ryegate gates the path drops down to skirt a pond which is backed by individual specimen trees. Across open lawns the east side of the park is defined with informal groups of trees. A riverside walk extends along the banks of the Colne.

The gardens to Hollytrees are shown without any trees or shrubs on the west side, the circular feature on the lawn is shown without any vegetation. The garden in the north bailey ditch is shown without any vegetation.



Figure HLD5
OS Map 1923

OS1923 (Figure HLD5)

By this time Hollytrees and the gardens had been purchased by the Council. Only a few changes have occurred since the last survey. The footpaths follow the same routes as before. A war time tank has been sited opposite the west end of Mayor's Walk. The trees along Mayor's Walk have matured. Looking further north in the Park fruit trees are depicted in the north bailey ditch. The sites of two areas of Roman pavement are shown near the bandstand. A glasshouse is located north of the pavilion. A pair of footbridges cross the river Colne from the northern end of the Park allowing access to the sports pavilion to the north.

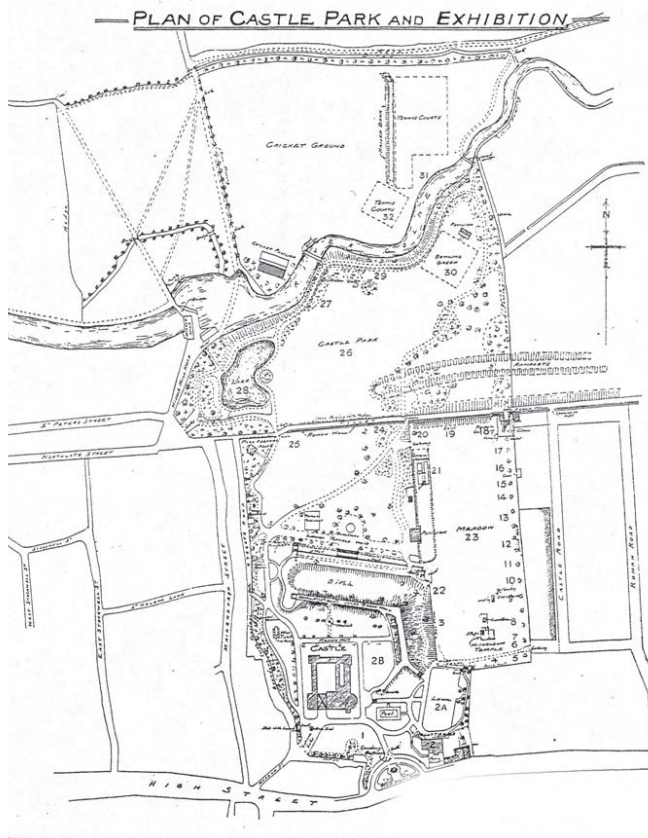


Figure HLD6
Plan of park for Empire Exhibition 1930

1930 British Empire exhibition plan (BR Figure 64; Figure HLD6)

Looking at the Park from the south end, the War Memorial and new entrance are apparent. The path network extends to Hollytrees Lawn and up onto the terraced walk. The Mithraeum Temple is shown in Hollytrees Meadow.

At the west end of the terraced walk the path descends to join a route towards the Lower Park. The Park Keeper's Lodge is located overlooking the pond. At the east end of the Lower Park a bowling green and pavilion are shown. Large numbers of tennis courts are sited across the River Colne. The south banks of the river appear to have embankments.

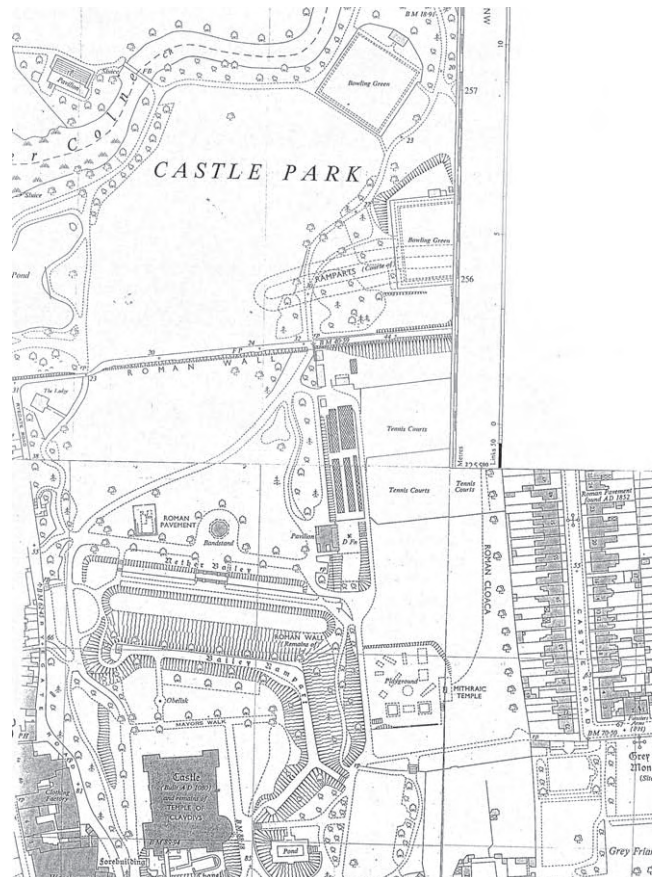


Figure HLD7
OS Map 1953

1953 OS (Figure HLD7)

The 1953 OS shows little change on the west side of the Park apart from the addition of the lodge adjacent to Ryegate Road. The east of the Park has been developed substantially. Starting at Hollytrees Lawn a rectangular pond has been introduced between the house and Castle on the site of the previous stables. Paths connect the bailey ramparts to the lawns and steps lead down towards the Mithraic Temple. A straight path runs north past a playground and towards a new pavilion. North of the pavilion a range of large glasshouses have been built and to the east tennis courts have been added. Crossing the Roman Wall and continuing north a bowling green and pavilion have been built astride the course of the ramparts. Further north lies another bowling green with pavilion.

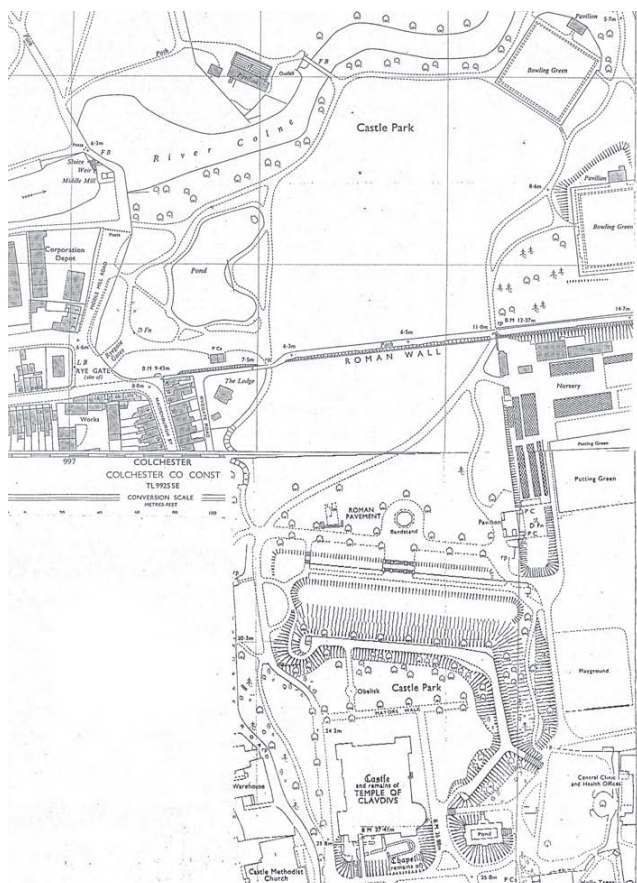


Figure HLD9
OS Map 1976

1976 OS (Figure HLD 39)

Close to the west boundary of the Park two small buildings have been added, one is close to the Lodge and the second overlooks the pond. The tennis courts have been removed in favour of a putting green and additional glasshouses north of this.



Figure HLD10
OS Map 1996

1996 OS (Figure HLD 10)

The survey does not show vegetation. The main circulation routes in the Park have changed very little. The Sensory Garden has been added. A number of commemorative gardens have been constructed throughout the Park. Other new features include Crazy Golf and Special Events Arena.

3.2 Detailed Historical Development

Gray's Layout

Gray's reworking of the Castle grounds is documented both in his diaries (see below) and illustrated on Morant's map of 1748 (Figure HLD10) and a map by Sparrow of 1769 (Figure HLD11). Morant shows Hollytrees (built 1718) with a formal garden to the south front and a long rectangular garden at the rear of the house. The form of an irregular shaped piece of ground immediately to the west of the house is difficult to identify. Between here and the Castle a Rotunda is shown at the south end of the rampart with a Summerhouse located at the west end of a tree lined walk which linked the two garden buildings. North of the rampart an arrangement of long thin rectangular beds have been laid out, overlooked by an additional garden building. This area was shown by Morant to



Figure HLD10
Morant map of 1748

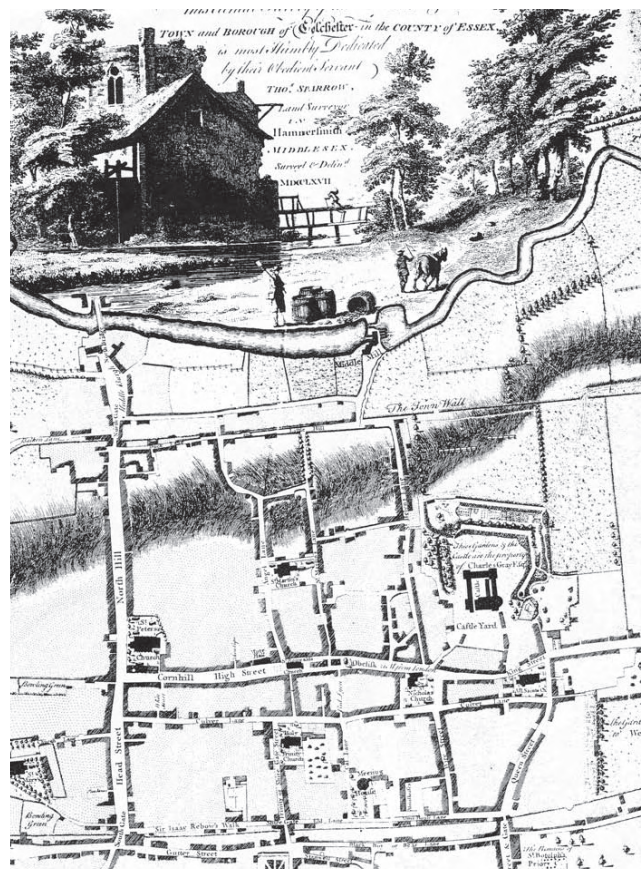


Figure HLD11
Thomas Sparrow map, 1767

have been laid out as a parterre with a series of beds laid out in geometric patterns. The location of a parterre would have been ideal here as it could be viewed from the rampart walk above. An avenue of trees is illustrated on the west side of the Castle. Morant shows the path across Sheepshead Meadow with tenters frames (used by the Colchester clothmakers) either side and this leads to the region of Duncan's Gate. The area which is now the Lower Park is shown with a short line of mature trees near the river bank.

The trees are more distinct on Sparrow's map 1767 and could have been planted as a device in order for Gray to take advantage of views over the surrounding countryside. In particular the lines of trees coming down the east side of the field end abruptly and may have been planted to direct the eye when viewing the landscape from the Rotunda on the east rampart. Sparrow shows Gray's revised layout of the garden by which time it had lost the formal garden north of the house overlooking expansive lawns with specimen trees. A path

leads up to the Rotunda and a curved path located further north leads up to the rampart walk diverting also to lead to the 'canal gardens'. The purpose of the curious formation of ground immediately to the west of the house is a mystery; with its bank of planting to the east and walls to the west and south it may have been a kitchen garden.

All quotations from Gray's papers are written as spelt and illegible words are marked with a '?'.

Gray referred to the development of his gardens in a diary and there are also bills for this period among his estate papers. Between 1728 and 1729 Gray formed the north rampart into a terraced walk which was terminated at the west end by a

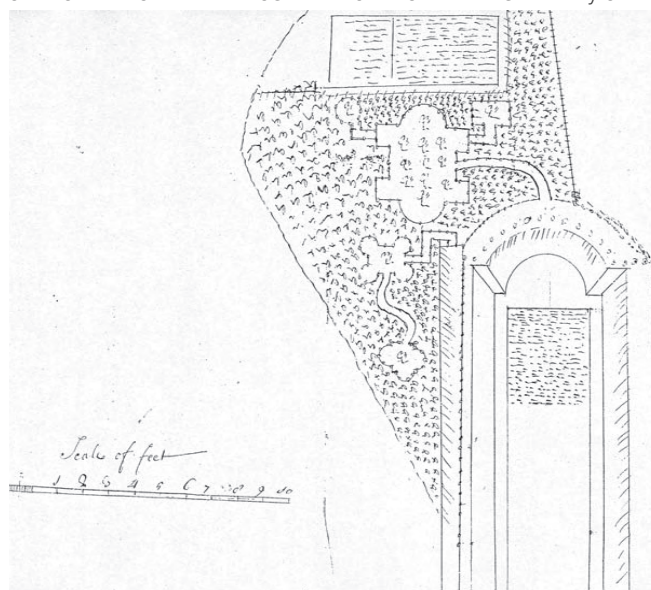


Figure HLD12
Undated plan showing rectangular pond at west end of rampart walk

temple style Summerhouse and later (1747) at the south east end with a Rotunda (ERO D/DR6 Acc.15)

A pond is mentioned in some of Gray's bills although where it was located is not clear. An undated plan shows a rectangular pond in a position which appears to be at the west end of the rampart walk (Figure HLD12) (ERO D/DR6 F6). Whether this second, relatively large body of water, was constructed or not is puzzling as the Morant plan of 1748 does not show an additional pond. The Morant map also reveals the

'canal' was laid out as a parterre only twenty years after being constructed. Adding a further perplexing dimension to Gray's finished garden is the Sparrow map of 1767 which shows an area that may have been a pond at the west end of the 'canal'. The ground on which the canal is shown is sand and this may be why the water holding was poor and consequently the canal was unsuccessful as a feature.

An undated estimate of work written by Mr. Smith gives a good impression of the scale of works required for Gray's scheme ... *An estimate of work upon ye Baily for Mr. Gray vize? the making of Terras Round past of the Baily from ye Gate next to ye sign of ye Castle to ye Corner of ye hill next to old path that runs between the Hills on ye north of the Castle: in Length 492 foot in width 12 foot from planting line to planting line (ERO D/DR6 F6). Subsequent bills and estimates add to the enormity of the scheme, such as the one below:*

March ye 24th 1728-9

Estimation of Odd Jobs for Mr. Gray for Carriage and disposing of 37 Loads of Gravel at 3d per load for Levelling and raking of ye steep slopes at ye west end of ye Canal and Cutting bringing & Laying and beating of Turf for Throwing out of ye arcade walk at ye west end of ye canal 6 inches deep 90 foot long & 7 foot wide 12 loads at 2d per for Levelling of slope next to rampart 70 foot long and 12 foot deep and Cutting of Turf and Laying and beating of Dams for Levelling and sweep at bottom of ye slope at ye west End of Canal 33 foot square and cutting Laying beating and fetching of turf for making of Tank Crofs of pond 33 foot long 3 foot wide & two foot Deep and ramming of dam every 3 ? for Raking Levelling and Turfing beating of ye slope next to ? of Greens 45 foot long & 7 foot deep for Raking Turfing of ye slope next ye grotto 10 foot by 8 for Levelling and Turfing of slope below ye Grotto 16 foot by 10 .. (ERO D/DR6 F6)

The thinking behind Gray's introduction of garden buildings at Hollytrees Mansion is regrettably not apparent as references in his diary are brief and factual. A Grotto was mentioned in the tasks listed above and this may refer to the building shown slightly to the north of the summerhouse on the Morant map (1748). The Grotto has not survived although there are fragments of an earlier building incorporated into the park keepers shed which is built into the west wall of the Upper Park. The building of the Summerhouse, not an

inconsequential building, was recorded in a perfunctory manner as on 24th May 1731: *Set up Summerhouse at west end of ye terrace.(p.37 ERO D/DR6 Acc. 15)*. The terrace allowed views over the landscape to the north and down to the parterre gardens below. In 1747 Gray recorded that he *took down Rotunda from ye low place and set it up at hither end of terrace, an extraordinary enterprise (p.18 ERO D/DR6 Acc. 15)*. Gray's diaries reveal a great fondness for trees, he describes numerous experimental plantings of tree seeds and the husbandry of his fruit trees (ERO D/DR6 Acc.15). The most significant phase of ornamental tree planting occurred in 1728 when he was billed for a large number of trees (see 4.9.1). Gray also describes using some of the trees to ornament particular parts of the garden. *The evergreens planted at ye East End of ye pond were planted 20th August 1728 (p.53 ERO D/DR6 Acc. 15)*. *In 1731 he planted ye Cedar of Cypress on ye terrace by the Summer house however, by 1733 he had moved it more opposite to ye south window of the Summerhouse. The walk under the East Terrace was planted with Elms in 1729 and the Hollies were planted in the middle of March the same year (p.53 ERO D/DR6 Acc. 15)*

Detail provided by Ordnance Survey OS1876

Starting at the south end of the Castle, a fence divides the western side from the area to the south of the Castle. We know a small area was let for public use and this southern section may have been laid out accordingly as it was traversed by a series of paths with a number of mature trees in close proximity. The western Castle grounds are entered from the bailey entrance and there are no gates. The grounds are devoid of vegetation and to the north west a large triangular shaped earthwork is located adjacent to the north rampart. A fence north of the Castle precludes entry to the grounds adjacent to the northern and eastern aspects of the building.

Tucked between Hollytrees and the Castle, at the south end of the terraced walk, lies a kitchen garden. The glasshouses and beds are sheltered by a small plantation of trees on the west which are divided by a serpentine path.

Figure HLD13
1st edition OS 1876

The wide lawn north of Hollytrees was sheltered and softened by screens of trees and shrubs. On the east side of the garden a secluded woodland walk emerged at the north end by a change in level which may have been a ha-ha. Slightly further north the garden wall has a small niche where the visitor could either view the wide landscape along the Colne or look back to the ornamental planting on the terraced walk with the Rotunda and Castle rising behind.

The circular clump of woodland on the north west side of the lawn would have acted as a screen to the kitchen garden. A path leads to the centre of the clump where a circular area is defined by a fence. Similarly the smaller clumps nearer the house may also have been planted to distract attention from the productive garden. The small garden south of Hollytrees is divided by a wide path to the front door flanked by mature trees on either side.

Influences on the Landscape Design of Gray's Layout

By the eighteenth century there was a marked distinction between the gardens of the differing echelons of landed society. Constraints imposed by acreage of land meant that not all landowners followed fashionable styles in garden design. Although we see the small formal axial gardens on either side and west of Gray's house on Morant's map (1748) he was unable to achieve the more extensive axial designs which were pursued by wealthier gentry in the countryside.

By the time of Sparrow's map (1767) Gray had changed the dynamics of his garden considerably. He strengthened the link between the enormous Castle Keep and garden as Pevsner observed using a somewhat Brobdingnagian garden ornament (cited Headley 1986). The link was not axial and Gray chose a naturalistic curvaceous layout. It is possible he was influenced by the adventurous design of George Wegg's garden (VCH 151) also shown by Sparrow to the south east of Hollytrees. Here a dense grove of trees or shrubs was planted with serpentine walks. Gray and Wegg both used the architect James Deane who could have influenced their taste. As a man of culture Gray would have been aware of the emergence of the 'English Landscape Style' which was so deeply influenced by painting and expanded through ideas disseminated by the philosophers and poets of the time.

Little is known about the development of Hollytrees pleasure

grounds during the 19th century a rough plan of the western corner of Hollytrees grounds adjacent to house made in 1883 (ERO D/DR6 F15), does not correspond with the layout shown on the 1876 or 1897 OS and is, therefore, likely to have been a proposal.

Heritage Merit of Gray's Layout

There is no doubt that Gray's layout is of great significance and continues to provide a unified structure. He integrated the ramparts into the garden by constructing paths, he introduced ornamental buildings to vary the focal points, provided viewpoints to the wider landscape and created dramatic views to the Castle all contributing to an extraordinary landscape.

Key Issue 1 - HLDC 1

To conserve, protect and restore as far as is practicable the Charles Gray layout and its remaining artefacts

3.3 Development and Design of Castle Park as a Public Park

Instigation

On Gray's death in 1782 the land was inherited by the Round family (VCH 242). In 1870 John Joslin submitted proposals for a public park to the trustees of Charles Gray Round. The land he wished to appropriate covered almost exactly the same area as the park laid out in 1892; the Castle Bailey area, Sheepshead Meadow and the two meadows adjacent to the river. Joslin's proposition was for part of the land to be public with certain areas reserved for the use of subscribers only (Brooks 7.1.1). Negotiations failed and in 1876 Edward Round, Wilson Marriage, J.J. Cross and John Joslin joined to hire an area of land south of the castle near the entrance from Museum Street. Military bands played there but the space was not sufficient to accommodate the public and the scheme failed by 1882.

Joslin revised his proposals for a larger park in 1882 and his memorandum revealed his meticulous plans for the scheme which included suggestions for the land to be made available and assurances of directives which would be issued to those visiting the Park (Brooks 7.2.1). Joslin continued to petition the council who felt the expense of the project was prohibitive and he was unsuccessful until a large legacy was left to the town by a Quaker businessman, Richard Catchpool (ECS 1892).

Acquisition of Land for Castle Park

In January 1891 the council set up a Special Committee to open negotiations with James Round regarding land which they wished to purchase in order to establish a public park. During discussions with the Special Committee on 17.1.1892 Round was asked to put the following questions to the Round Trustees:

Would they sell the Corporation a) Sheepshead Meadow, b) the ground extending from the right of way to the west end of the terrace; c) the two meadows abutting the river d) the level meadow, north of the holly trees, from the iron fence to the Town Wall, and at what price?

If they did not wish to sell Hollytrees Meadow would they grant a long lease to the Corporation, and on what terms? Would they lease to the Corporation, for a long term, the Castle and Castle bailey and on what conditions? In the event of an agreement would they open a new road from the High Street to the Castle bailey and grounds?

The trustees were prepared to lease Sheepshead Meadow to the Corporation and a large area of ground which extended from the right of way to the west end of the terrace (west side of Castle) and two meadows by the river. However, they were not prepared to release the land north of Hollytrees House, thereby excluding Hollytrees House and garden from ground leased to form the public park. Although they were prepared to lease the land they wanted the option to sell it if required. The trustees were not prepared to lease the Castle Keep but agreed to let the Castle bailey and garden for a nominal rent. They also indicated they were prepared to co-operate with the Corporation in building a new road.

The two parties wrangled over details for months and it was reported early in the proceedings that some Council members were unhappy about the level of recompense the Round Trustees required (ECS 14.11.1891).

By April 1892 most details had been agreed and access was proposed via Museum Street and Rye Gate and by footpath from the east via Castle Road. The Round Trustees specified that a fence should be erected between the Park and gardens to Hollytrees House.

The Backhouse Layout

As there was a requirement to complete the scheme in time for the Oyster Feast, it is probable that the Council felt they required experienced assistance from a professional firm to complete the work in time and approached Messrs. Backhouse and Co. The Backhouse's began by advising how they perceived the Park should be used. They were well acquainted with the expense of laying out gardens particularly as they were suppliers of unusual plants. They seemed to take the view that the Park was suitable for active recreation rather than the model which was recommended by the presence of numerous flower beds to divert the visitor.

The absence of display bedding is unusual but the Council appeared to concur with advice from the Backhouse's that the Park should not be designed as a garden. This may also have been a reflection of the inability of the Council to afford the rockeries or ferneries for which the firm were famous. Feature beds of bedding plants were not incorporated into the Park design until the advent of the Bell Gardens in 1901. However, to maintain historical character and continuity, the tree and shrub species that were planted should be investigated and replaced when they over-mature or die. The Backhouse design was partly imposed by the presence of the Castle and associated trees in the Upper Park and the sweep down across the meadow to the river in the Lower Park. The views were weakened on the west side by the presence of unsightly buildings which were to be screened by large trees and tall evergreens. Opposite on the east side, planting was added to complete the interior space.

The Upper Park was negotiated by a path which travelled round the Castle and a direct path to Catchpool Avenue where the visitor could either promenade along the avenue past the bandstand, or walk across the lawns to cross the Roman Wall and enter the Lower Park. A serpentine path in the Lower Park continued around the perimeter giving carefully contrived views across the river, surrounding landscape and up to the Castle. The sports facilities were located on the expanse of grass in the centre.

A report from Messrs. Backhouse and Co. was submitted to the Council. They stated that the site was a most admirable one, lending itself to the picturesque arrangement, open air equipment and free access to the Colne for boating, bathing

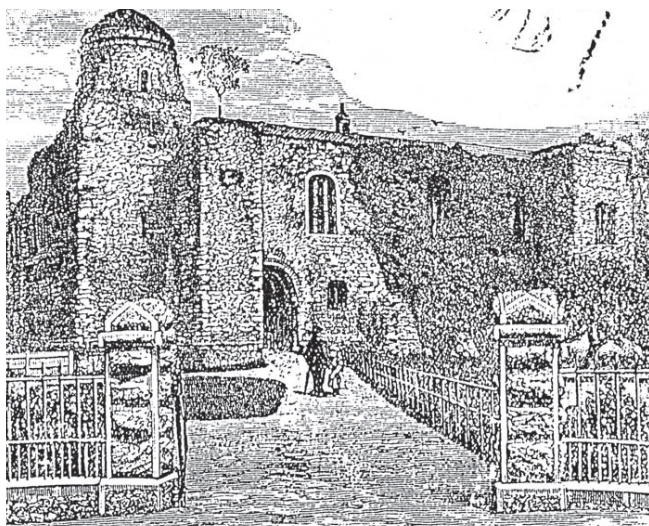


Figure HLD14
Mid C18 illustration showing the fence to Charles Gray's grounds

etc. The Backhouse's suggested the formation of a park rather than a garden, which would minimise the annual cost of upkeep and would enable the allocation of the whole area to public enjoyment. They thought the soil was admirably adapted to the growth of trees and shrubs.

A 12ft path from the entrance at the bailey was proposed (where there would be iron folding gates). This would be planted with an avenue of elms 30ft apart. Paths would also be formed in the Castle Yard with lines of elms. Large trees and tall evergreens were proposed for the west side of the Castle Yard skirting the brewery. This plantation would hide the adjacent premises, and would be surrounded by an iron fence.

Entering the gates the 12ft footpath would be continued to the Roman Wall, the saw pit being filled up (a small area see: 1876 1/500 OS). Immediately on passing through the saw pit would come the gravelled Promenade on the right, and standing on the grass would be four rows of limes 15 feet apart, (in the future every alternate one would be thinned out).

The bandstand surrounded by a double row of limes, would be located in the centre of the promenade recessed from the main walk. At the east end of the promenade would stand the pavilion with a ladies retiring place 30 x 15 ft. Along the west side from the gates to the cross footpath coming in from Ryegate a plantation of tall evergreens and deciduous trees

was proposed, the side nearest to the path being planted with flowering shrubs. It was recommended that the footpath running obliquely across the present field should be closed at night if possible. Pedestrians could then pass by the diagonal path running east and west, or up to the Castle Yard by the path from the Ryegate entrance. The road between park and cottages would be defined by an iron fence.

They proposed to alter the line of the footpath running east and west placing it on the north side of the Roman Wall, erecting an iron fence on the north side of the path, also an iron fence on the south side of the path from the Ryegate entrance up to the part where the Roman Wall in its highest part stops. The path was to be 6ft wide and at its east end pass under the bridge that carries over the road from the Upper to Lower Park (location of bridge not confirmed). There

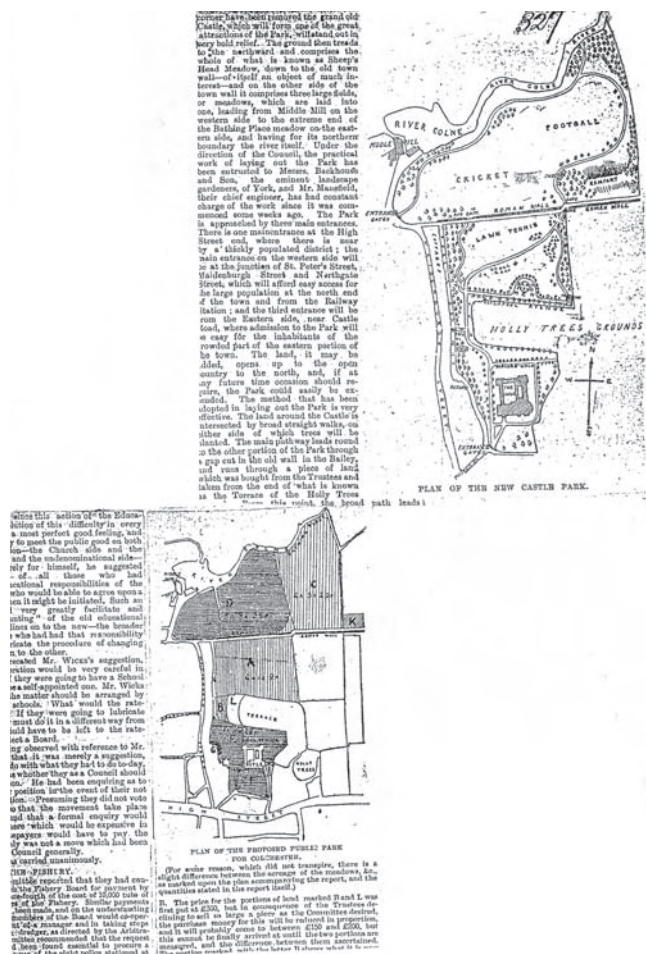


Figure HLD15
Plans of Park in contemporary newspaper reports

would be two hand gates on the west end and one at the east end of this path. These were to be locked at night. A tennis ground was to be formed at the south side of the Roman Wall, between it and the main path. Passing over the brick bridge from the Upper to Lower Park a second pavilion would be on the left and a cricket ground on the right. From here the 8ft wall would pass forward on the east side to the clump to be formed to hide the bathing place beyond. The path would then go along the north to the west side of the ground and passing through a plantation would terminate at the entrance near Ryegate. Boundary Plantations, clumps, beds, drains and so on were figured on the plans. The gravelled paths owing to the expense of bringing good road ballast to the spot would come to £684 for 6,220 yards. The outer boundary was to be an iron fence with thorn and holly on the inside. A site for football would be set apart at the north east corner of the lower ground.

Messrs. Backhouse offered the council 3 options, to:

- execute the design according to plans and specifications.
- execute parts only.
- oversee implementation of the scheme.

In fact the Backhouse firm designed, constructed and supervised the layout of the park (CBC Accounts). (BR Figure 30).

Estimates and descriptions for laying out Castle Park were reported in a local newspaper. The Town Council made the following proposals (ECS 23.4.1892):

- Fencing would be carried out by local contractors.
- Footpaths roads and drains were to be constructed by the Corporation.
- Any building would be carried out by contract.
- The work of planting, levelling and general superintendence was to be entrusted to Messrs. Backhouse and Son of York.
- The shrubs and trees would be purchased, as far as desirable in the neighbourhood.

Initially the structure of the Upper Park was laid out, the Museum Gates, paths, tree and shrub planting and lawns.

The operation was carried out in a matter of weeks by approximately a hundred men (ECS 22.10.1892). Features in the Park such as the Pavilion, Bandstand and Ryegate entrance, lower pathways, further tree and shrub planting were added by 1896.

Wallace Scheme

Although the Council were eventually able to purchase Hollytrees, the sale stipulated that the resident of the house Col. Davidson was entitled to continue living there and remain undisturbed by the new arrangements. However, he acceded to local nurseryman RW Wallace surveying the gardens who produced designs for a new layout in 1922 (BR Figures 46, 47; Figures HLD16,17). The resulting proposals were radical with a strong axial theme and similar to work of designers such as Joshua Major and his exponents William Barron and Thomas Mawson. As a programme of archaeological work was underway the proposals were shelved and apparently dismissed.

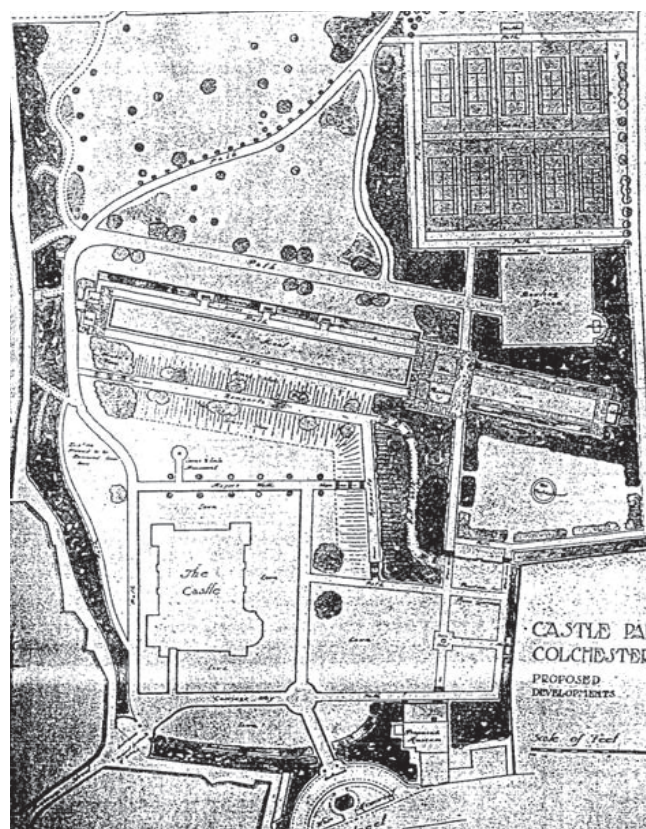


Figure HLD16
Plan of Wallace proposals, 1922

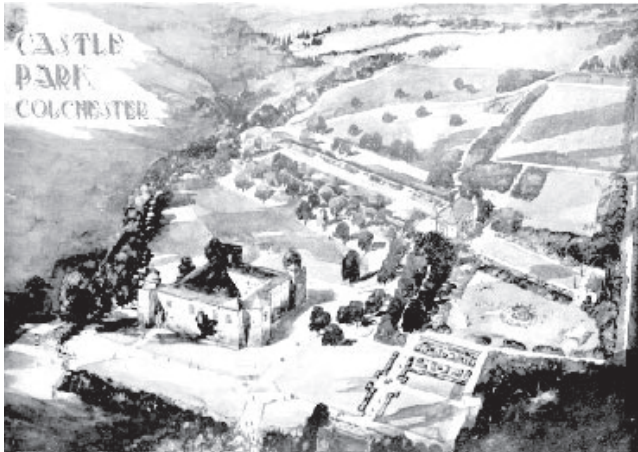


Figure HLD17
Birdseye view of Wallace proposals

Summary of influences on the development of the landscape of Castle Park

Charles Gray modified the Castle grounds on the east side during the mid C18, nearest Hollytrees, but appeared to have altered little of the remaining land. Mid C18 illustrations show quite distinctly that the grounds were divided by a fence (Figure HLD14). The division of the grounds was not removed until the Council purchased Hollytrees estate in 1922 when it was incorporated into the public park.

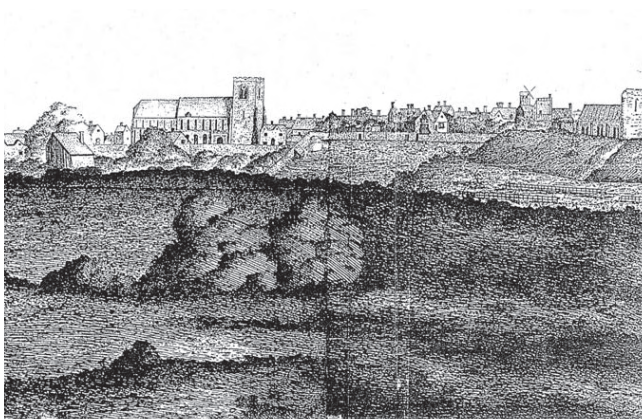


Figure HLD18
Meheux's prospect, 1697

Meheux's prospect (1697 Figure HLD18) and Prior's prospect (1724 Figure HLD19) show the Castle bailey hills without trees. However, by 1740 Deane's prospect shows evidence of Gray's restoration and trees are planted on the bailey hills and along the west side of the boundary.

A painting by AK Glover in 1840 (CMS Acc.37.1994 - not illustrated) shows the bailey hills as uneven grassland, the terrace is in view with an earth path and appears to be almost enclosed by dense vegetation.

When Gray took on Hollytrees House and later the Castle, the site became fragmented and character areas developed as the gardens evolved. The three major areas to emerge were: the garden to Hollytrees; the remaining land associated with the Castle; and, the fields between the Castle and River Colne.

Firstly, the omnipresent Castle Keep draws the eye from all aspects in the Upper Park. Gray took advantage of views of the Castle on the west side of his garden and landscape to the north. He framed views from the house across to the Castle by creating sweeping lawns and planting specimen trees.



Figure HLD19
Prior's prospect, 1724

When the public park was laid out, the landscape on the west side of the Castle changed dramatically as Messrs. Backhouse planted what were described at the time as thick clumps of trees *...in order to shut out the unsightly view of the backs of the houses in that neighbourhood* (ECS 22.10.1892). The planting of the Lower Park articulated an area which was previously pasture. The field edges were softened by the introduction of winding paths.

These were set against clumps of trees and shrubs which served to add intimacy and privacy for the Park visitors and also added a sense of mystery to the extent and interior dimensions of the Park shaping views such as the articulation of the relationship between the pond and river which may have

made the pond appear larger than it was.

Although there were proposals to landscape the grounds of Hollytrees when it was purchased, it appears they were left largely unaltered, apart from the Lily Pond, and changed later on an ad hoc basis. The Victorian Backhouse layout implemented from 1892-96, is a significant and successful overlay of the Gray layout. Together, they provide the essential structure of the Park within which subsequent developments have taken place.

Key Issue 2 - HLDC 2

To conserve, protect and restore as far as is practicable the Victorian Backhouse layout and its remaining artefacts

The Opening of Castle Park

The Park was opened by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir David Evans, on 20th October 1892. It coincided with the ancient traditional Oyster Feast. The town was bedecked with flags and bunting from every window flags floated in the air, whilst every point that lent itself to decoration was utilised (ECS 22.10 1892). There may be temptation to ridicule such events as it is easy to underestimate the magnitude of civic pride in a small rural Victorian town.

A contemporary newspaper reports that no expense was spared when the Assembly Rooms at the Town Hall were decorated: the windows of the room were hung with curtains of rich material and the floor was covered with blue felt, upon which was placed various costly Oriental and Axminster carpets, the room being fitted up as a drawing room, with valuable inlaid cabinets, screens, furniture and Indian embroideries. There were also some excellent floral decorations, including, as a speciality, some lovely Japanese lilies, and altogether the room presented a charming appearance.

The Lord Mayor of London named the park Castle Park and the main walk Catchpool Avenue. He also dedicated a memorial to the Royalist Officers shot during the siege of 1648. During the ceremony an avenue of trees were planted by the 14 local Mayors who had attended - it was named the Mayors Walk.

Continuing Development of Castle Park From 1892

After the opening of Castle Park in 1892 the land north of the Colne was bequeathed as a direct extension to the Park or an area which could be leased to fund the Park. The first bequest was from Alderman Paxman in 1893 after he purchased ground from the Mercers Company which extended north from Middle Mill to the lower end of Catchpool Road.

Brooks suggests that there were reports of flood defences built on the south bank of the Colne during the winter of 1892/1893 and the sketch of the Lower Park on the Paxman bequest deed plan certainly shows a large area of water.

1907

In 1907 Wilson Marriage made a gift of two parcels of land adjacent to the Paxman bequest. The bridge crossing the river was not illustrated on the deed map.

From 1920

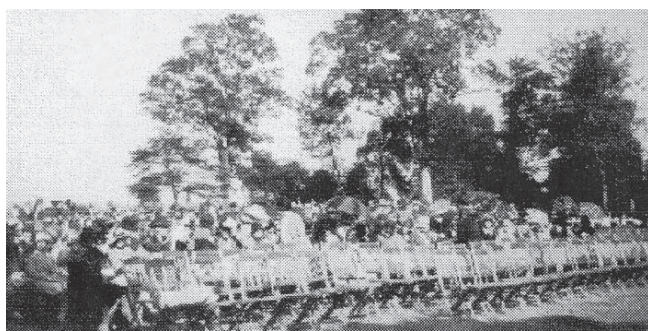
Gray leased off some of the land in the bailey front section of the garden and this is illustrated in contemporary prints. The division continued until between 1920 and 1922 when the Council purchased the Castle, and Hollytrees House and gardens (which included Hollytrees Meadow and the north bailey ramparts) from the Round Trustees. Land which the council previously rented from the Trustees, north of the river, was also purchased. The purchase was funded by a donation from Lord Cowdray.

Extensive archaeological excavations took place on the Mithraeum and Duncan's Gate following the purchase of the Hollytrees Extension in 1922. As a consequence, the opening, performed by Annie Viscountess Cowdray, was postponed until 26th September 1929 (BR Figure. 61; Figure HLD20). The Council also proceeded with further purchases and embarked on a large programme of demolition of properties along the High Street boundary of the Park where it was intended to build the new Cowdray Crescent and Gates. A War Memorial with gates and railings were built at the entrance and completed in 1922. The Park boundary was enlarged slightly at the southern end. (BR Figure 45; Figure HLD21)



Figure HLD20
The Hollytrees opening 26 September 1929

Annie Viscountess Cowdray is centre in the official opening party (top)



Before (3/8/31) and after (1/7/32), view to the north-east



Before (3/8/31) and after (1/7/32), view to the north-east

Figure HLD21
The 1931-32 Relocation of the Southern Boundary

1979

The Riverside Walk was formed on land adopted in 1979. The new path extended towards Marriages Mill (East Mill). Surplus soil from the construction of the Williams and Griffin multi-storey car park is thought to have been used to reinforce the riverbanks in Castle Park to prevent flooding; it has been assumed by Brooks (1997), that this was used in the region of a new riverside walk built in 1979.

3.4 Historical Landscape Features of the Park

The following are significant historical landscape features of the Park, they are located on the map illustrated in Figure HLD22.



Figure HLD22
Historical Landscape Features

3.4.1 Badge Bed

It is thought the Badge Bed was originally located to the east of the Avignon Garden, adjacent to the Bell Gardens, and was moved in the 1960s to face the Lily Pond (Brooks 1997 20.4.7). (BR Figure 52; Figure HLD23)



*Figure HLD23
The Badge Bed*

3.4.2 Bathing Pool

A bathing place was shown on the 1876 OS sheet and is illustrated on the map published in a newspaper at the time of the opening of the Park (22.10.1892). This was a popular feature particularly for men and school children; 'ladies only' bathing place at certain times. A charge was made to swimmers. The pool was used by troops during the First World War when ladies bathing was suspended. Proposals for a swimming pool at East Bay heralded the end of the river bathing site (CBM 9.10.1912). (BR Figure 40; Figure HLD24).



*Figure HLD24
The Bathing Place in the early 1930s*

3.4.3 Duncan's Gate

This is the north east gate of the Roman Town and was discovered in 1853 by a former Mayor of Colchester Dr. P.M. Duncan. It is discussed in more detail in the Archaeology section of this report.

3.4.4 Model Boating Pond

Maps of the land where the Park was built show a mill adjacent to the Colne Middle Mill. The pond was filled with the assistance of Colchester Volunteer Fire Brigade.

The proprietor of the mill Mr. Ezekiel Chopping allowed a pipe to be laid into the mill head to provide a water supply for the pond. A report in 1893 described the Model Boat Pond as complete (CBC 5.4.1893). (Figure HLD25).



*Figure HLD25
Boating Pond*

3.4.5 Lily Pond

The Lily Pond was built in 1929. The design is a typical 'Modern Garden' pond (Taylor 1936) but does not correspond with the Wallace proposals. The formal pool forms an effective link between the gardens of Hollytrees and the Castle. The edge of the pool is broken by square planters and the surround is flanked by wide paved borders backed by informal herbaceous planting. To date no plans have come to light of this feature. (BR 48; Figure HLD26)

3.4.6 Riverside Walk

The walk was added to the Lower Park in 1979 and enabled visitors to walk alongside the Colne to Marriages Mill (East Mill).

3.4.7 Rockery

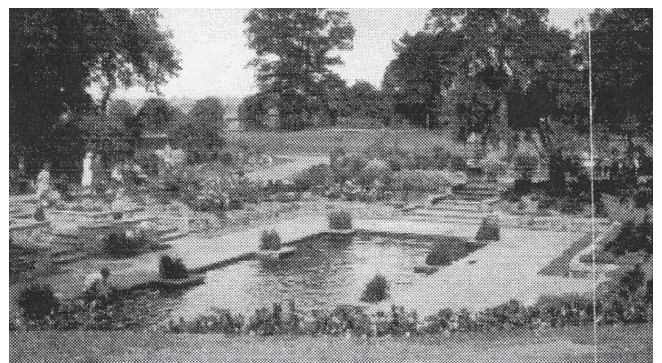
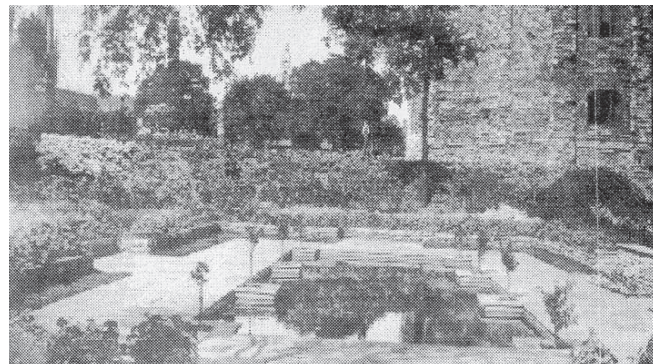
Although the Backhouse's were renowned for their rockeries, being specialists in alpine plants, they did not propose a rockery for Castle Park. A gun used during the Boer War (1899 - 1902) was located on the mound immediately west of the north west corner of the Keep, later occupied by a tank, then the rockery.

3.4.8 Roman Remains

Roman remains are discussed in more detail in the section on Archaeology. There are a few instances of the Parks Committee dealing with aspects of Romans remains in the Park and these are discussed below.

When the Park was laid out it was reported in the press that archaeological remains were exposed during preparations (ECS 10.9.1892).

The Town Wall was repaired by the Council in 1901 (CBM 1.2.1901). When construction of Cowdray Crescent commenced in 1921 archaeologists were keen to investigate the site which was at the time a large cavity.



*Figure HLD26
The Lily Pond*

3.4.9 Sensory Garden

The Sensory Garden was built on the site of the 'Garden of Fragrance' opened in 1953 to celebrate the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Opened in 1995, the design for the Sensory Garden was the result of the collaboration of five artists. The garden runs along the east side of Hollytrees and is terminated by a shelter. A large block of Portland stone marks the entrance and commemorates the new emphasis of the garden which is for those with disabilities. The garden was planted with 200 species of plants and includes a pergola and a number of features made with mosaics.

3.4.10 War Memorial

In 1919 Colchester Castle was purchased by Lord and Lady Cowdray as a gift to the town of Colchester to commemorate World War I. The War Memorial Committee resolved that the monument for the War Memorial should be located on land recently cleared by demolition allowing good visibility from the High Street. Lord Cowdray stated: *The War Memorial monument must be part of the daily life of Colchester, and must be in full view of the people*. The clearance of a group of buildings and mason's yard also allowed a better view of the Castle from the High Street. In 1919, the Royal Academy invited artists to submit models for an exhibition of designs for War Memorials. Colchester War Memorial was chosen from a submission by Mr HC Fehr whose work consisted of an arrangement of three statues in which Winged Victory stood above statues of St George and Peace, which were alternated with inscribed panels. The monument is not a listed structure. In January 1921 Messrs. Beaumont & son commenced building walls, piers, railings and lamps to form the crescent and setting for the War Memorial.

3.5 Planting

The following are descriptions of historically significant plantings within the Park. They are located on the map illustrated in Figure HLD22.

3.5.1 Hollytrees Garden - Trees and shrubs

Gray's tree planting is recorded in his diaries and illustrated on Morant's map of 1748 and a map by Sparrow of 1769. Morant shows an avenue of trees illustrated on the west side

of the Castle. Gray may also have planted the avenue of trees along the top of the rampart in order to link the Summerhouse and Rotunda. Sparrow shows Gray's revised layout of the garden with lawns and specimen trees. The trees are more distinct on Sparrow's map of 1767 and some which are illustrated could have been planted as a device to direct views over the surrounding countryside.

The line of trees on the east side of the field end abruptly and were perhaps planted as part of the view from the Rotunda on the east rampart. Fortunately the bills for Gray's trees purchased in 1728 have survived and reveal that he bought Dutch Elms, Spanish Chestnuts, Horse Chestnuts, Service, Cork Tree, Holly thorn, Arbutus, Scotch (Fir?), Spruce, Laburnum, Almond, Scarlet Oak, Cedar of Lebanon, Cedar of Bermuda (?) and Cypress (ERO D/DR6 F7). The oldest trees in the Park are considered to be yews and hollies immediately north of Hollytrees House (Ray Martin CBC).

An area referred to as the 'Old Shrubbery' north of the Lily Pond was removed during the seventies. Whether any remnants of the garden planting remained at this time is not evident (Brooks 1997 20.4.7) (Fig.HLD27).



Figure HLD27
Hollytrees Mansion
(Gall 1932)

3.5.2 Castle Park - Trees and shrubs

During the opening ceremony of the Park an avenue of trees were planted along Mayors Walk by each of the fourteen mayors of the town (ECS 22.10.1892). Catchpool Avenue was also planted when the Park was laid out in 1892 (Figure HLD28). The outer row of trees planted on each side of Catchpool Avenue were felled in 1906 (CBM 12.1.1906).



*Figure HLD28
Catchpool Avenue
c.1892*

Following the opening of the Park many locals presented trees. However, none of these were unusual - Thorny Acacia, Rowan, Elm, Oak, Sycamore, Lime, Chestnut, Cupressus lawsonii, Lobii superba, Lombardy Poplar, Larch and Alders. In 1922 Mr. R. A. Easthough wished to present an oak tree grown from the famous Polstead Gospel Oak (13.12.1922). There is also a reference in 1905 to the purchase of Spiraea to be planted along the river bank in the lower park (CBM 8.2.1905).

In 1912 two hundred willows were planted at the east of the Lower Park, possibly as a cash crop - a 1922 reference records the sale of 120 willows from near the cricket ground (presumably the same trees).

Drummond Lovell photographs show tree felling on the Norman ramparts during the 1930s.

Brooks (1997 20.3.3.) raises the question of whether the limes in Mayors Avenue were replanted during the 1930s.

The ravages of Dutch Elm disease necessitated the replacement of trees on the ramparts with London Plane

which were planted c.1973 on either side of the rampart.

(Brooks 1997 20.4.2). Elms were also lost near the fishpond, Ryegate and the Castle Keep.

The 1987 Hurricane caused a minimum of damage to tree stock in the Park. Only a few trees were lost - mainly from the east/north bailey bank (4 or 5).

Trees were planted along the Riverside Walk during National Tree Week in 1988. It is thought the more mature trees here were planted when the walk was opened in 1979 (Brooks 1997).

Two family names figure prominently in the Council minutes as having donated plants between 1892 and 1912. Benjamin Cant was a local rose grower and Robert Wallace produced bulbs. Benjamin Cant donated a large number of roses in 1893 which were planted at the front of the Castle (CBM 10.12.1892). At the same time Wallace gave 500 bulbs which were planted by the pond. Other locals donated a succession of herbaceous plants such as iris, lilies, narcissi, hosta, etc.

3.5.3 Avignon Garden

The garden was laid out in the ditch of the Castle ramparts and was opened in 1982, commemorating the twinning of Colchester with Avignon in France (see also Rose Walk). (BR 39, Figure HLD29).



*Figure HLD29
Norman Ditch ("Avignon Garden") as it was in 1936*

3.5.4 The Cants Beds and Charter 800

The roses planted in beds located near the Museum Street entrance to the Park were donated by Cants Nurseries in 1989 and commemorated the Charter 800 year.

3.5.5 Heather Bed

The Heather Bed was created to replace the Rhododendron Bed (see below) during 1979 or 1980. A tree planted in the border is dedicated to Cyril Sargeant, Mayor of Colchester 1979-1980.

3.5.6 Rhododendron Beds

A feature bed was planted with Rhododendrons on the north east slope of the Park. This area is now planted with heathers. In 1902 the Borough Surveyor was instructed to purchase such numbers of Azalea and Rhododendron as are needful for filling in vacant places in the bed. (BR Figures 37, 3; Figures HLD30, 31).

3.5.7 Rose Walk

When the remaining Hollytrees estate was purchased in 1922 Rose Walk was laid out in the Castle bailey ditch where Gray had previously made his Canal Garden. A gap was broken through the garden wall in 1929 to accommodate steps to Catchpool Avenue and Drummond Lovell photographs dated 1936 (DL-1822) show the wall with a recently bowed edge.

3.5.8 UN Beds

A new bed was made on the eastern edge of the Rose Beds to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations 1945 - 1995. A retaining wall was also built as previously the ground sloped awkwardly there. A teardrop shaped raised bed was built adjacent to the UN bed in 1996.

3.5.9 VE & VJ Beds and Burma Star Beds

The 50th Anniversary of VE and VJ day was commemorated with new beds formed near the Bell Gardens in 1995. In fact they were made over the position of the original Badge Bed.



*Figure HLD30
View of the park early this century*



*Figure HLD31
Rhododendron beds on northeast edge of park (now the Heather Bed)*

3.5.10 Wetzlar Garden

The Wetzlar Gardens were built on the site of Frere House which was demolished in 1933. The gardens were renamed in 1979 to commemorate the tenth anniversary of town twinning with Wetzlar. Grave slabs in the Wetzlar Garden were removed from Marks Hall Church which was demolished in 1933. The large block of limestone was erected in the garden in 1989 in order to commemorate twenty years of twinning between the towns of Colchester and Wetzlar.

3.6 Buildings and Structures

The following are descriptions of historically significant buildings and structures within the Park. They are located on the map illustrated in Figure HLD22. Listed buildings and structures are as follows, full descriptions can be found in Appendix 2:

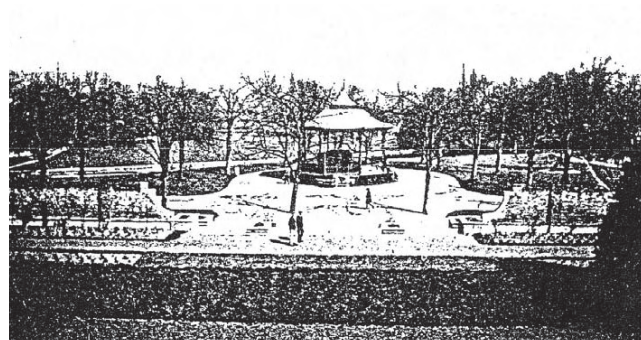
- Castle Park - Grade II
- The Castle Keep (including excavated remains of forebuilding in moat) - Grade I. The Keep is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument
- Hollytrees House - Grade I
- Gateway to Castle Park - Grade II
- Roman wall 65 yards north north west of the Castle - Grade II
- Archway 30 yards east of the Castle - Grade II
- Roman Pavement, 130 yards north of the Castle - Grade II
- Summerhouse, c. 30 yards north of the castle - Grade II

3.6.1 The Bandstand

A bandstand was always a priority for the Park, however, it was not built in time for the opening. When the small park was set up in 1876 by the Joslin/Round/Marriage/Cross group, band music was played regularly. When the Park was built a temporary site for band music was used on a flat area of land near Catchpool Avenue, probably on the site of the present bandstand (ECS 8.4.1893). When the subject of a bandstand came under discussion in 1894 the committee were inclined to purchase a wooden structure with a removable canvas roof. The proposed bandstand was 30ft wide and this was thought to be an adequate dimension to accommodate a full military band. Tenders were invited for the works but arrested by an approach from Messrs. MacFarlane & Co. who sent alternative designs.

The Council decided that as the military bands played in their regalia without charging, the least they could do was provide a proper stand (ECS 20.4.1895). Military bands were the main performers in the early years up to the First World War.

A number of local bands also performed regularly in the Park. (BR Figure 32; FigureHLD32).



*Figure HLD32
The Bandstand - The Bandstand as photographed by Drummond Lovell in 1930, viewed through the hole in the Hollytrees wall made in 1929.*

3.6.2 Upper and Lower Bowling Green Pavilions

The Upper Bowling Green Pavilion is of little merit, it was built in conjunction with the bowling green in 1935. The Lower Bowling Green Pavilion is a thatched pavilion thought to have been constructed in conjunction with the building of the bowling green in 1922.

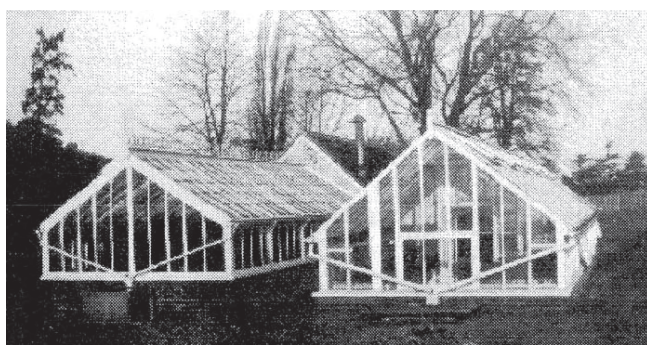
3.6.3 Gardeners Hut

A Grotto was referred to in a list of works to be completed in Gray's garden in 1728 but the location was not specified (ERO D/DR6 F). A third garden building in the Castle grounds was shown by Morant in 1748 but it is not possible to tell whether it was a Grotto or not.

3.6.4 Greenhouses

The 1876 OS shows an area to the west of Hollytrees House which is separated from the main garden. This was probably the productive garden as there are two glasshouses, a variety of beds and small service buildings. Following the setting out of Castle Park in 1892 the Borough Surveyor was asked in 1897 to prepare and submit plans for a glasshouse in which to grow on plants during the winter. The glasshouse was not built until 1902 when the council built the brickwork and Walter Chambers constructed the timber and glass sections. Two greenhouses are shown on the 1923 OS and

were located north of the present cafe. Hollytrees Meadow was shown on an aerial photograph of c.1927 and appears to have been used partly for growing vegetables, whether this was for market gardening or supplying Hollytrees is not known. By 1948 the site had two large greenhouses and also a pair of cold frames which are thought to have been removed in 1985 (Brooks 1997). The nursery developed piecemeal until ultimately it was dotted with cold frames, small buildings and the greenhouse had been extended (BC drawing cp10e-121956). In 1990 the nursery was decommissioned as it was no longer thought to be economically viable. Since closure the site has been used for contractor storage. The largest glasshouse was demolished in 1996. (BR Figure 54; Figure HLD33)



*Figure HLD33
The greenhouses on nursery site, December 10th 1929
(DL 604)*

3.6.5 Middle Mill

Middle Mill was located on the River Colne adjacent to the north west corner of the Park (See 1876 OS). The mill was recorded as the King's Mill in c.1101 when Henry I granted a third of it to St. Botolph's priory. The priory retained ownership until the Dissolution when it was granted to Sir Thomas Audley. On Audley's death possession reverted to the Crown. The property passed through a number of ownerships before being purchased by Charles Gray in 1757 and eventually it was passed to the Round family with the Castle lands. The mill was used for corn and fulling during the C16 and C17 by the C19 it was used for corn only, adopting steam power by 1886. In 1933 the Marriages of East Mill purchased the mill and then sold it to the Borough Council in 1934 and demolished it in the 1950s, although the mill race remains standing.

3.6.6 Park Keeper's Lodge

Park Lodge was built in 1924 (CBM 10.9.1924).

3.6.7 The Pavilion

Preliminary designs for the pavilion at the east end of Catchpool Avenue, were submitted by Major Bale FRIBA in 1892. It was intended that the building would provide accommodation for approximately 80 people in wet weather and would include a private room for ladies and conveniences. A clock donated by Messrs Hopwood & Son would be placed in the gable, facing the avenue. The building was constructed by Mr. Dupont in 1893 (CPC 13.12.1893).

In 1896 a series of improvements were undertaken by the Council with the introduction of a refreshment bar and upgraded conveniences (CPC 14.4.1896). In 1904 a galvanised awning was added to increase cover during the rain (CPC 13.4.1904). The pavilion was demolished in 1930. (BR Figure 31; Figure HLD34).



*Figure HLD34
The pavilion with the corrugated iron awning built in 1929
(DL 331)*



The pavilion early this century

3.6.8 The Park Cafe

The current cafe/pavilion was constructed c.1930 in the neo-Georgian/classical style which was commonly used for minor municipal buildings. Whilst not without its charm, it has no particular architectural merit.

3.6.9 The Rotunda

During the 18th century it was fashionable to adorn pleasure grounds with a bewildering range of ornamental buildings. The Rotunda was a simple circular building without any interior structures. It is built in a mixture of stone, stone and flint rubble, with some Roman tiles and modern brick. The whole archway is about 10ft high and is surmounted by a rough pediment. In 1747 Gray recorded that he took down the Rotunda from ye low place and set it up at hither end of terrace (p.18 ERO D/DR6 Acc.15).

3.6.10 Shelters

Colchester celebrated Coronation Day in 1953 with the opening of a Shelter and Garden of Fragrance. The shelter was subsequently remodelled and the garden was redesigned as a Sensory Garden in 1995 (EADT 18.7.1995).

3.6.11 Summerhouse

The Summerhouse was built by Charles Gray in 1731 in the form of a miniature tetrastyle Greek temple and the interior was decorated with plaster medallions. Summerhouses were built as pavilions or places to spend time in whilst in the garden. The designs often utilised fanciful architecture.

3.6.12 Toilets

Toilets in the Upper Park, adjacent to the putting green were closed during the mid-1980s.

3.6.13 War time buildings and structures in the Park

Second World War air raid shelters were built in Castle Park. ARP shelters were reputed to have been built at the southern end of Hollytrees Meadow. The Lower Park saw the introduction of tank defences in the north west corner on the south bank of the river. These are an interesting and

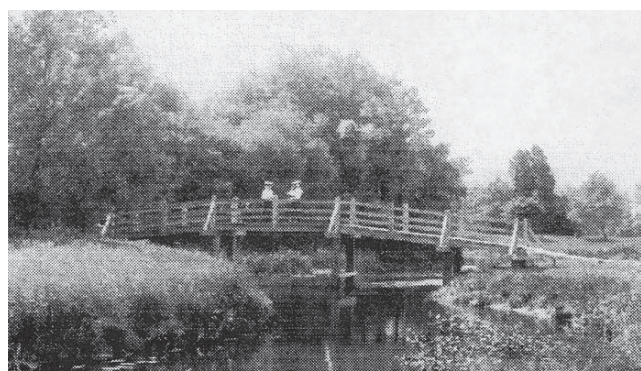
unexpected feature of the Park's history and are a visible reminder of the World War II Colchester 'Stop Line'.

3.7 Access and Circulation

By April 1892 access to the Park was proposed via Museum Street and Rye Gates and by footpath from the east via Castle Road. A newspaper description of the opening of the Park mentions the provisions made for circulation of visitors: *The land around the Castle is intersected by broad straight walks, on either side of which trees will be planted. The main pathway leads round to the other portion of the Park through a gap cut in the old wall in the Bailey and runs through a piece of land which was brought from the Trustees and taken from the end of what is known as the Terrace of the Holly Trees grounds. From this point the broad path leads into Sheep's Head Meadow where the Park lies on a steep slope, except the upper portion which has been converted into a broad avenue, to be known henceforward as Catchpool Avenue after the family of the donor.* The following elements of the access and circulation system within the Park are located on the map illustrated in Figure HLD22.

3.7.1 Bridges

A new bridge was built, presumably across the Colne, in 1911 (CBM 24.7.1911). This may have been the first of the two footbridges shown on the 1923 OS. (BR Figure 37; Figure HLD35).



*Figure HLD35
View of the park early this century*

3.7.2 Gates

The Museum Street gates were donated by Alderman Egerton Green and were made by Barnard Bishop & Barnard from Norwich. The gates were described by the Illustrated London News as being made of wrought and hammered iron consisting of a pair of carriage gates with two side gates (ILN12.11.1892).

The Ryegate Gates were given by the Colchester MP Captain Leyland in 1892. In 1911 it was recorded that repairs were carried out to the gates (CBM 24.7.1911).

When Lord Cowdray donated funds to purchase an extension to the Park in 1920 he contributed further to the Council towards the costs new entrance gates. The scheme was carried out by Messrs. Beaumont & Son who built dwarf railings, piers etc., supplied and built granite posts, bronze lions and iron chains and also stone lamp columns fitted with bronze lamp columns.

3.7.3 Footpaths

In 1900 the paths were tarred replacing the gravel surface. In 1911 it was recorded that repairs were carried out to the footpaths (CBM 24.7.1911).

3.7.4 Lamps

A pair of lamps which were on the pillars of the gates to the Castle were restored in 1988 (ECS 15.1.1988).

3.7.5 Steps

Following the addition of the Hollytrees Garden to the Park, the surveyor was responsible for building Roman style steps to the Rose Walk from the centre of Catchpool Avenue in 1929. The new link necessitated breaking through the old garden wall (see Rose Walk). The steps which lead from Hollytrees Garden to the rampart were not shown on the 1876 OS or 1923 OS, however, it does appear on the plan produced for the 1930 Empire Exhibition map. These steps were rebuilt in 1996.

3.7.6 Summary of access and circulation

The various access points and footpaths into and through the Park are a legacy of its historic development and, in particular, the Gray and the Backhouse layouts. Together they provide a wide variety of experiences and prospects that link together physically and visually the various artefacts of the Park such as the Castle, Hollytrees, the Summerhouse, the river, the Pavilion, the gardens, etc. Any new development should respect historic entrances, footpaths and views.

3.8 Park Furnishings

Key Issue 3 - HLDC 3

To ensure that design improvements to the Park consider means to visually and physically link features to enhance visitor appreciation and understanding, and broaden the appeal to a wider audience

The following historical significant Park furnishings are located on the map illustrated in Figure HLD 22.

3.8.1 Armada Beacon

The beacon was built at the west end of Catchpool Avenue in 1988 to commemorate the first sighting of the Spanish Armada in 1588.

3.8.2 Boer War Memorial

A gun used during the Boer War (1899 - 1902) was located on the mound immediately west of the north west corner of the Keep (later occupied by a tank then a rockery.) The gun fell into disrepair and was removed in 1916 (CBM 12.1 1916). A First World War tank was located on the same spot and this was present at least until the 1930s when it was photographed by Drummond Lovell. (BR Figure 41; Figure HLD36).

3.8.3 Drinking Fountain

Miss Catchpool donated £10 for the erection of a drinking fountain in the Park. The fountain was located east of the disused toilet block and south of the crazy golf course and bears an inscription dated 1930.



Figure HLD36
The South African war trophy (after 1904) looking north past Bell Gardens

A second fountain was donated by Mr. Joslin in the name of his daughter Dodie in 1895 and located just inside the Ryegate gates. (CBC Minutes 25.10.1895).

3.8.4 Lucas-Lisle Memorial

In May 1892, Councillor Laver built, at his own expense, a memorial to Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle who were shot after the siege of 1648 (CBC Minutes 7.5.1892). The monument was erected on the north side of the Castle alongside a path named Mayors Walk when the Park was opened in the location where the men are thought to have been executed.



Figure HLD37
Trees and shrubs early this century

3.8.5 Maybury Seat

A brick walled seat was built at the end of Catchpool Avenue with an inscription reading: *In memory of William Augustus Maybury who practised in Colchester from 1875 to August 16th 1924. Erected by his family.* The seat was built on the footings of the pavilion which was demolished in 1931.

3.8.6 Park Bell

In 1901 the Park bell, to ring at closing time, was sited among a series of flower beds later known locally as the Bell Gardens (BR Figure 38; Figure HLD37). The design for the bell was copied from the medieval bell in the Town Hall and inscribed Thomas Marie Sonat in Aethere Clare (Thomas sounds clearly to Mary in the Heavens) (CBC6.3.1893).

3.8.7 Railings

A Colchester firm H & G Joslin won a tender to install gates and railings (CBC Minutes 7.9.1892). Wrought iron hurdles 3ft 6inches high were installed to protect the grass in 1893, they replaced existing iron hoops. The hurdles were made by Williams and Co. (CBM 7.6.1893).

3.8.8 Seats

Between 1892 and 1896 it was recorded in Council minutes that a number of seats had been donated to the Park by a variety of local businesses and private individuals including Colchester Liberal Club, Members of the Borough Police force, Employees at the Locomotive Department at North Station and Co-operative and Industrial Society. In 1911 it was recorded that repairs were carried out to the seats (CBM 24.7.1911).

3.8.9 Sundial

A sundial from Brantham rectory was presented to the Borough by the Deputy Mayor Wilson Marriage and it was positioned between the gates and the Castle. An inscription on the sundial read *Horas non numero nisi serenas*, translated reads "Let others tell of storms and showers, I'll only count your sunny hours" (CBC 24.12.1892).

The approaches to the Castle were remodelled during the

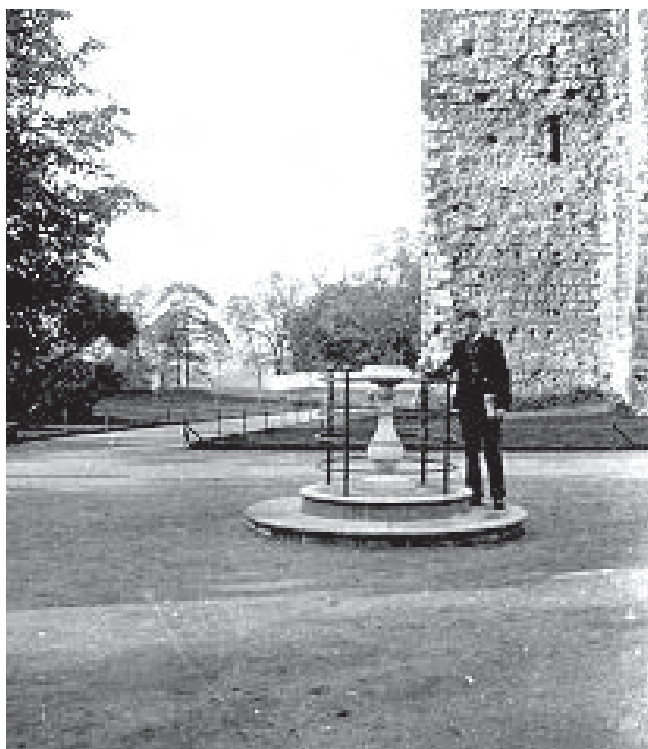


Figure HLD38
Mr. Greenwoods negative taken about 1880

early 1930s and it is thought the sundial was removed then. A copy of the sundial was placed in the rose beds south-east of the Keep. As it was vandalised in the 1970s it was removed to Tymperleys House (GMR Davies) (Figure HLD38).

3.8.10 Litter Bins

The first litter bins were installed in Castle Park in 1899. It was resolved that the Borough Surveyor have about a dozen drain pipes placed in conspicuous positions in Castle Park to be used as receptacles for waste paper, the pipes to be suitably lettered (CBM 25.8.1899).

3.9 Sports and Leisure facilities

A clash was noted between sporting interests when sports were forbidden south of the Roman Wall (CBM 6.2.1899). The following are the historically significant sports facilities. They are located on the map illustrated in Figure HLD22.

3.9.1 Bowling Greens

The first bowling green was located south of the Castle Keep (see Castle Grounds). In 1912 a site was allocated for bowling in Castle Park. In 1922 plans were drawn up to lay a proper bowling green in the Park as unemployment relief works – the present Lower Green in the Lower Park. The Colchester Bowls Club was officially opened on the 2nd May 1929 and photographed by Drummond Lovell. The Upper Green was built in 1935.

3.9.2 Children's Playground

The first proposed playground was to be built near the north east corner of the pond but this location was rejected (CBM 8.2.1922). The playground was, however, built in this location later. By 1948 the playground was relocated to its present location.

3.9.3 Crazy Golf

The Crazy Golf Pitch was built in 1985 in the eastern, lower bailey ditch following the removal of cold frames (Brooks 1997).

3.9.4 Cricket

A Robert Wilkinson print of 1791 shows a group playing cricket north of the Castle Keep (Museum collections). The plan published for the opening of the Park (ECS 22.10.1892) shows proposals for cricket at the lower end of Sheepshead Meadow. Cricket matches were underway shortly after the Park was opened (ECS 10.6.1893).

Colchester and Essex cricket club moved to Castle Park in 1908 (VCH 302). The cricket pitch was relocated across the river before 1946. In 1922 there is the first reference to the County Cricket Week Festival which was held in the Park (CBM 8.3.1922).

3.9.5 Football

Although an area was allocated for football when the Park was laid out it seems that other grounds may have taken precedence. It is no longer played formally in the Park.

3.9.6 Quoits

In 1912 St. Paul's Mens Social Club were allocated a portion of the cricket ground adjoining the quoits pitch for bowling.

3.9.7 Tennis Courts

The plan published for the opening of the Park (ECS 22.10.1892) shows proposals for lawn tennis at the lower end of Sheepshead Meadow. There is no evidence to suggest tennis was ever played there - the sloping ground would probably have made it impossible. Following discussions with the Council the tennis club located their courts elsewhere (CBM 10.4.1912). There would appear to have been eight courts in the Upper Park as evidenced by the 1923 OS sheet and an aerial photo of 1923 (NMR 82-71). By 1967 a putting green occupied the site (NMR OS- 67063).

3.10 Use as a Public Park and for Events

In 1894 following lobbying by religious bodies the Council rejected the proposal to allow the Excelsior Friends Band to play in the Park on Sundays (CBM 6.6.1894). Other events which took place included a Sunday Concert held on St. George's Day 1899 which attracted 5 to 6 thousand people (undated newspaper 4. 1899). A Mayor's reception and garden party, tea party for the British Medical Association, Dog Shows, First Aid display by the Red Cross Society and numerous fetes and bazaars took place.

In 1903 there was a fireworks display and an illuminated fete (CBM 25.9.1903). A military tattoo took place in 1904 and 1905 in aid of the Soldiers and Families Association and these continued until the outbreak of the Second World War. Colchester Rose and Horticultural Society held their summer show and military display before the First World War. Promenade Concerts were among the first events organised by the Borough and in 1903 between 4 and 5 thousand people attended a free concert and illuminated concerts took place later in the year, raising money for charity.

The Colchester Pageant was held in 1909 and is considered to be the first major event held in the Park. Hollytrees was rented as a headquarters by the Pageant Committee.

In 1921 the Essex County Cycling and Athletics Association were permitted to use Castle Park on the 15th July for the Essex County Championship (CBM 14.12.1921). A 'Joy Day' was held in aid of St. John's Ambulance in 1922, whether it was repeated is not recorded. The same year a Grand Fete and Gala was held to raise funds for a number of local charities. The Colchester Trades Union Council & Borough Labour Party were permitted to use the Park for their May Day demonstration in 1922 (CBM 24.3.1922). Rose and Horticultural Summer Shows were held from 1923 (Borough Report 24.3.1922) and displays by Cants Nurseries were a great attraction to the public.

In 1930 a British Empire Exhibition was held in the Park. Visitors were directed along a route which demonstrated aspects of horticulture and history in the Park. Tattoos were held from the 1960s until 1990 by the Colchester Community Fund and Colchester Garrison and HQ Eastern District of the Army. The meadows in the Lower Park provided a popular venue for funfairs which continued until recently. The Essex History Fair was held in 1989. The Centenary of the Park was celebrated in 1992. Between 1985 and 1994 the Council used the Park as a venue for 'Enterprise Shows' which encouraged the promotion of local industry.

Large scale open air concerts have been held annually since 1993. Firework displays and the traditional bonfire remain a popular attraction in Castle Park.

Today, there are a growing number of regular events held in the Park, including the Food and Drink Festival, the Oyster Fair, Young Children's Festival and Bandstand concerts.

On 13 June 2009, there will be a 21 Gun Salute in the Park to celebrate the Queen's birthday. The lower part of the Park has been designated an official firing station for the Queen's birthday. The salute will be conducted by the Parachute Regiment based in Colchester.

3.11 Heritage Merit of Castle Park

The Heritage Merit of all significant features within the Park is scheduled in Table 1. The features are identified, their significance analysed, their Heritage Merit graded High, Medium or Low, and a reference to their more detailed description within this section listed.

When the Park was opened in 1892 Sir David Evans drew attention to the efforts of the Corporation of London in securing Epping Forest for the use of the public. Evans described the parks movement as one of the most important municipal gestures which had been established in the country and he thought the benefits were reflected in the stature England had at that time.

Although the impetus for innovative park design was strong when Joslin began campaigning for a public park, in Colchester it had undoubtedly begun to recede by the 1890s when the Park was built. The Backhouse design for the layout of the Park is not exceptional and it is disappointing that illustrations of a rockery do not coincide with their activities in the Park. The design was fairly functional and reflects the accommodation of sports as well as more sedate activities. The Upper and Lower sections of the Park are distinct areas, the Upper being ornamental while the Lower was functional.

The dominance of Gray's layout, despite the overlay of the Victorian Public Park and developments this century, is undoubted. Gray's legacy continues to provide a unified structure. He integrated the ramparts into the garden by constructing paths, he introduced ornamental buildings to vary the focal points, provided viewpoints to the wider landscape and created dramatic views to the Castle all contributing to an extraordinary landscape.

The Heritage Merit of Castle Park is, therefore, reflected by a number of influences on the history of the site. There is a significant overlay of phases of development, the Roman Town, the Norman ramparts and Keep, Gray's pleasure grounds and the Public Park, which was eventually founded after many years of opposition. There is also an important quality of integrity between the Park and surrounding Conservation Area. All this combines to make it a site of prime cultural significance. It is, therefore, imperative that any development proposals are framed within the context of the historical layout and artefacts.

Key Issue 4 - HLDC 4

To limit the impact of development on the historical layout and artefacts

As tourism becomes more important to Colchester and public interest in cultural and environmental history grows, so the opportunity to interpret, educate and enhance understanding of the design of the Park should be exploited.

Key Issue 5 - HLDC 5

To improve the presentation and interpretation of the landscape design of the Park, enhancing users knowledge and experience of the landscape

3.12 Summary of Key Issues for Historical Landscape Design Conservation in Castle Park

The following is a summary of the Key Issues for Historical Landscape Design Conservation identified in this section. Together, they form a strategy for dealing with historical landscape design conservation issues when preparing restoration and development proposals for the Park.

HLDC 1

To protect and restore as far as is practicable the Charles Gray layout and its remaining artefacts

HLDC 2

To protect and restore as far as is practicable the Victorian Backhouse layout and its remaining artefacts

HLDC 3

To ensure that design improvements to the Park consider means to visually and physically link features to enhance visitor appreciation and understanding

HLDC 4

To limit the impact of development on the historical layout and artefacts

HLDC 5

To improve the presentation and interpretation of the landscape design of the Park

Table 1: Schedule of Heritage Merit

Feature	Analysis	Heritage merit	Reference
Landscape Design			
Charles Gray's design	Gray's design continues to dominate the gardens of Hollytrees Mansion with the provision of garden buildings, focal points, views out to landscape and back to the Castle	High	3.2
Public Park	The original layout of the park has changed very little and has matured to offer the visitor much of the variety of experience envisaged when laid out.	High	3.3
Landscape Features			
Roman Remains	see Archaeology Assessment	High	3.4.8
Duncan's Gate	see Archaeology Assessment	High	3.4.3
Model Boating Pond	Part of original concept design, completed 1893	High	3.4.4
Bathing Place	Shown on 1876 OS	Medium	3.4.2
Lily Pond	Classic 1920s 'Modern Garden' design.	Medium	3.4.5
Rockery	An early addition to the park. Early C20 cultivation of rockery plants.	Medium	3.4.7
Badge Bed	Relocated, previously near Bell Bed.	Low	3.4.8
Riverside Walk	Late addition 1979	Low	3.4.6
Sensory Garden	Built in 1995, replaced earlier 'Garden of Fragrance' 1953	Low	3.4.9
Planting			
Hollytrees Gardens - Trees & Shrubs	Much of outline of Gray's original design remains apparent.	High	3.5.1
Castle Park - Trees & Shrubs	Many areas of planting have survived from 1892 layout	High	3.5.2
Avignon Garden	Previous location of Gray's 'canal garden'. Important boundary wall.	High	3.5.3
The Cants Beds & Charter Beds	Important local connection with Cants Nurseries, however, these beds not laid out until 1989	Low	3.5.4
Rhododendron Bed	Early feature of the public park. Significant location	High	3.5.6
Heather Bed	Significant location see 3.3.3.6	Low	3.5.5
Rose Walk	Rose beds in previous location of Gray's 'canal garden'.	Low	3.5.7
UN Beds	Display beds located in part of Gray's 'canal garden'. Additional retaining wall and raised bed adding further conflict ?	Low	3.5.8
VE & VJ Beds and Burma Star Bed	Replaced Badge Bed in 1995	Low	3.5.9
Wetzelar Garden	On site of house demolished 1933. Not located on part of Hollytrees Garden or public park.	Low	3.5.10
Buildings and artefacts			
Castle Museum	Central feature within landscape of the Park	High	3.0 + Appendix 2
Hollytrees Mansion	Significant building within the landscape of the Upper Park	High	3.0 + Appendix 2
Bandstand	Integral part of original design although not completed until 1896.	High	3.6.1
Park cafe	Site important feature as nexus of park routes	High	3.6.8
Rotunda	Garden building built by Gray.	High	3.6.9
Summerhouse	Garden building built by Gray.	High	3.6.11
Lower Bowling Green Pavilion (thatched)	c.1922 Rustic Style, thatched building.	Medium	3.6.2
Gardener's Hut	Built into west wall, decorated with fragments from earlier garden building.	Medium	3.6.3
Greenhouses	Significant location where a complex of glasshouses of varying dates were built. The Victorian greenhouses are thought to have been demolished by 1948.	Medium	3.6.4
Park Keeper's Lodge	Built 1924 to a simple design, the requirement for the building appears to be functional rather than ornamental.	Medium	3.6.6
Pavilion	c.1930 replaced 1893 pavilion.	Medium	3.6.7

War Time tank traps	Interesting and unexpected part of the Park's history and visible reminder of the WWII Colchester 'Stop Line'	Medium	3.6.13
Upper Bowling Green Pavilion	c.1935	Low	3.6.2
Shelter	c.1953	Low	3.6.10
Toilets		Low	3.6.12
Access and Circulation			
Gates	Three main entrances all marked by original gates.	High	3.7.2
Footpaths	Majority correspond with original routes in Castle Grounds and Public Park	High	3.7.3
Lamps	Victorian lamps on gates at Castle entrance.	High	3.7.4
Hollytrees steps	Steps from Hollytrees garden to rampart not shown until 1930.	High	3.7.5
Bridges	c.1911 & c.1920	Low	3.7.1
Catchpool Avenue steps	Steps from Catchpool Av. to Rose Garden built when Hollytrees garden incorporated into park 1929.	Low	3.7.5
Park Structures and Furnishings			
Lucas Lisle Memorial	1892 first memorial in park.	High	3.8.4
Seats	1893 -	High	3.8.8
Railings	Original park boundary railings constructed in 1892; and, Cowdray Crescent railings 1922.	High	3.8.7
Drinking Fountain	Donated 1930	Medium	3.8.3
Litter Bins	no original bins remain.		3.8.10
Maybury Seat	built 1924	Low	3.8.5
Armada Beacon	Constructed 1988	Low	3.8.1
Boer War Memorial	removed		3.8.2
Park Bell	removed		3.8.6
Sundial	removed		3.8.9
Sports Facilities			
Lower Bowling Green	Contributes to the ambience of the park, continuing a traditional pastime	High	3.9.1
Quoits	Pitch provided 1912.	Medium	3.9.6
Upper Bowling Green	c.1935 offers little visual contribution to park.	Low	3.9.1
Children's playground	1922 -Relocated to present site 1948	Low	3.9.2
Crazy Golf	c.1985	Low	3.9.3
Cricket	Engraving shows cricket played in Castle meadow 1791. relocated across river.	Low	3.9.4
Tennis Courts	Tennis courts shown 1923 OS removed by 1967	Low	3.9.7

Table 2: Chronicle of Development of Castle Park

Date	Event
AD43	Roman Conquest of Britain
c.AD44	Roman Fortress built at Colchester and used as a base for Roman army
AD49	Colchester converted to Colony for retired veteran soldiers. Castle Park lies within an annex to the main town and is surrounded by a ditch.
c.AD54	Colchester (Camulodunum) becomes capital city of the Roman Province of Britain. Construction of Temple to the Emperor Claudius begun in Castle Park. Ditch around annex was filled in. Street between Insula 14 and 22 built.
AD 60/61	Boudicca rebellion and the sacking of Colchester. London becomes the provincial capital.
AD 65/80	Building of the Roman Town Wall, and extension of the town to the east into Castle Park. New Streets and Insulae 6, 7, 14, 15 set out.
AD250	Saxon and European Invasions begin in Britain. During 3 rd Century Colchester falls into disrepair, street system is lost, and town shrinks in size.
4th century	Coming of Christianity
8/9th century	Occupation of town is centred round St Runwald's Church on west side of town.
917	Edward the Elder expels Danes from Colchester town, and takes steps to re-establish it – he repairs defences and new streets are laid out. Royal Council or 'witan' held at Colchester.
1066	Battle of Hastings – Norman Invasion (William I - The Conqueror)
1071	Danish attack on town
1076 – 1100	Norman Castle built at Colchester on top of Foundations of earlier Roman temple.
1085	Threatened invasion by Cnut of Denmark
1087	William II comes to power
c. 1100	Creation of rampart and ditch to castle. The building of the south wall of the bailey diverted course of High Street.
1120	Eudes the sewer dies, Castle escheated to the Crown
1132	Henry I visits Colchester
1135	Stephen I comes to power
1154	Henry II comes to power
1173-4	Castle strengthened, garrisoned and victualled
Late 12th Century	Outer Bailey defences constructed.
1199	John I comes to power
1215	French force occupied the castle
1216	King John places castle under siege and forces a French surrender.
1242	Henry III visits Colchester
c. 1600 -	Colchester Castle no longer defensible, extensive repairs required.
c.1622 -	Castle falls into decay and bairly buildings are lost.
1637 -	Roof of Hall known to have collapsed.
1650 -	Reported that castle no longer worth cost of repair.
1649 -	Demolition of large sections of the castle earthworks, removal of stone and large quantities of sand started by Charles Lord Stanhope.
1685 -	Wheeley granted building leases for lean-to houses or sheds against the west wall of the ?.
1709 -	Bowling Green depicted on estate plan. Thought to have been constructed by Wheeley - would have involved much earth moving to render it flat.
1726 -	Hollytrees (built 1718), and Castle given to Charles Gray .
c.1729 -	Charles Gray laid out Castle grounds creating raised walk on castle earthworks, a canal, summerhouse dated 1731 and rebuilt rotunda on terrace 1747. Gray also planted trees during this phase of improvements.
1748 -	West wing added to Hollytrees by James Deane
1748 -	Morant's map shows Hollytrees, layout of grounds, avenue of trees on west of castle and trees planted on sides of the rampart. In addition to the garden buildings described c.1731 another summerhouse is depicted by Morant overlooking the <i>canal</i> . The gardens to the north and south of Hollytrees, and along the <i>canal</i> are shown in a formal arrangement.
1767 -	Sparrow's map shows a change to the layout of the garden adjacent to Hollytrees. The rectangular arrangement north of the house has been abandoned in favour of a curvaceous lawn flowing towards the castle and integrating the two sites which are now linked by a path leading up to the rampart walk.

1782 -	Gray died and the estate passed to Round family.
1830 -	Sketch after Turner shows Gray's trees mature.
1853 -	Duncan's Gate discovered by Dr. PM Duncan
1876 -	1876 OS The 1st edition OS the Lower Summerhouse is not shown (small building in that location). Wall introduced (E/W) dividing castle grounds from Hollytrees Meadow. Mature trees depicted on east side of Hollytrees Meadow.
1870 -	John Joslin made proposals for a scheme to lay out a public park : divided into an area for free access and a larger section for those who paid a subscription.
1876 -	Edward Round, Wilson Marriage, JJ Cross and Joselin hired land to front of Castle. Used by military bands but not a success and abandoned by 1882. Joselin continued to suggest the Corporation should provide a public park. Bathing place shown on 1876 OS.
1892-	Catchpool legacy.
	A Special Committee began negotiations with James Round with a view to acquiring land suitable for a Public Park.
	Councillor Laver requested permission to build a memorial to Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle on the spot where they were shot during the 1648 siege.
	The Park was laid out by a firm from York, Backhouses. Between 1892 and 1912 the Cant family, local rose growers, donated substantial quantities of roses for the park. There were also gifts of bulbs from RW Wallace.
	The opening was arranged to coincide with the annual St. Dennis' Fair & Colchester Oyster Feast.
1893 -	Flood bank built during winter 1892/93 location not specified. Drinking Fountain donated by Miss Catchpool. <i>Model Boat Pond</i> completed. A sundial was introduced to the park (removed 1970). Sundial brought to park from Brantham Rectory, by Deputy Mayor. Paxman Bequest of land on north side of Colne.
1894 -	A <i>Pavilion</i> was erected although in many ways it was unsuitable for the purposes for which it had been designed and subsequently alterations occurred. Demolished c.1930
1895 -	<i>Bandstand</i> , built by McFarland & Co.
1897-	First <i>Greenhouse</i> built for Castle Park.
1899 -	Litter bins installed in the park.
1901 -	Bell to ring at closing time installed in <i>Bell Beds</i> .
1902 -	Oak presented by <i>Hearts of Oak Benefit Society</i> to mark the Coronation of Edward VII.
1906 -	Outer row of trees removed from Catchpole Avenue.
1907 -	<i>Wilson Marriage bequest</i> of land referred to as King's Mead or King's Head Meadow.
1911 -	New bridge built.
1912 -	A site was allocated for the playing of bowls
1922 -	Holly Trees Estate purchased by the Council.
	<i>Rose Walk</i> planted in Castle bailey ditch.
	<i>Playground</i> built.
1923 -	1923 Os shows 8 <i>tennis courts</i> in lower park.
1924 -	<i>Park Keeper's Lodge</i> built.
1929-	<i>Lily Pond</i> built.
1930 -	<i>Drinking Fountain</i> donated by Miss Catchpool. Maybury Seat built.
1940's -	Second World War Defences constructed along River Colne as part of the Eastern Command Line. Anti tank barriers located in Lower Castle Park.
1943 -	Four bombs canded in Castle Park
1953 -	<i>Shelter</i> and <i>Garden of Fragrance</i> opened.
1967 -	Putting Green on site of tennis courts.
1979-	<i>Badge Bed</i> relocated to east end of Lily Pond.
1979-	<i>Riverside Walk</i> formed on land purchased that year.
1979-	<i>Wetzlar Gardens</i> opened.
1980-	<i>Heather Bed</i> replaced Rhododendron Bed
1982 -	<i>Avignon Garden</i> laid out.
1985 -	Crazy Golf course built.
1988 -	Armada Beacon built in Castle Park.
1989 -	Cants Beds and Charter 800 beds laid out
	VE & VJ Beds and Burma Star Beds laid out.

