4.0 Archaeology

A great difficulty lies in explaining the idea that very often significance lies not in the feature itself but in its relationship across space and through time with other phenomena…The huge challenge, especially when the concept of historic environment is grasped, is how to manage the landscape by taking everything knowledgeably and sympathetically into account (of which heritage matters are only a part), and yet still produce a landscape, an environment, which actually works.

P.J. Fowler. "The Past in Contemporary Society" (1992).

4.1 Introduction

Castle Park, Colchester comprises a rich archaeological site spanning many centuries. Its repeated occupation from Roman times has resulted in an area abundant, not only in visible archaeological structures, but also a wealth of buried archaeology and stratigraphy - stratigraphy is the build up of deposits over time that are important in understanding periods of occupation and for dating them.

A full description of the chronological development of the Park is given in Table 3 'Chronicle of Development of Castle Park'.

The Park contains approximately 10 percent of the first Roman Town of Roman Britain, the largest keep ever built by the Normans, as well as a number of other outstanding features. Its importance in heritage terms is reflected in the designation of the Upper Park as a Scheduled Ancient Monument and the scheduling of the main standing remains as Grade I and II listed buildings (refer to Appendix 2).

Key Issue 1 - ARCH 1
To conserve and protect standing archaeological remains recognising the heritage value of the Park, and to enhance practical conservation skills and knowledge.

Whilst the historic record is rich, the decline of periods of occupation and later developments such as Gray's garden and the development of the Park, has resulted in many archaeological features becoming spatially, physically and visually fragmented. As such they often lose their meaning to the visitor. Some features such as the Norman Castle are so significant that they remain important in their own right but others are more subtle features that gain their importance from association, either with related features or because of their landscape setting.

4.2 Assessment Approach

The archaeological appraisal has covered remains from 43AD through to 1600, and has assessed both standing and buried archaeology. Standing archaeological remains in the park were assessed in terms of their current state and opportunities for restoration and management. Their visibility from within the Park and their contribution to the character and experience of the Park was also assessed. This identified further Key Issues that were used to develop the Restoration and Development Plan for the Park that enhances the visitor's understanding and appreciation of the historic significance of the park.

A gradiometer survey was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust, and a resistivity survey was carried out by Peter Cott, to assess the buried archaeology within the park. The results of the surveys were combined with existing knowledge of the park from previous excavations, in order to establish the most sensitive areas of buried archaeology and the results are discussed in section 5.0.

Although of considerable help in establishing where significant buried archaeology occurs it was not possible for the magnetometer survey to provide a complete picture of buried archaeology. Consequently, although this information is invaluable when developing restoration proposals, it is recognised that any development within the Park would require further archaeological evaluation. Such evaluation and any other ground disturbance would require Scheduled Monument Consent before work commences. Appropriate resources need to be allocated to cover this work.

Proposals for the archaeological features of the park have been developed from the above assessments, and have focused on the following aims:

- The enhancement of historic integrity;
- The creation of visual cohesion and unity;
- The improvement of the setting and thus recognition and

understanding of historic monuments;

- To increase the range of audiences;
- The enhancement of nature conservation related to historic features; and
- The avoidance of adverse development both visual and in terms of ground disturbance.

Key Issue 2 - ARCH2
To limit the impact of development on archaeology

4.3 Visible Archaeology

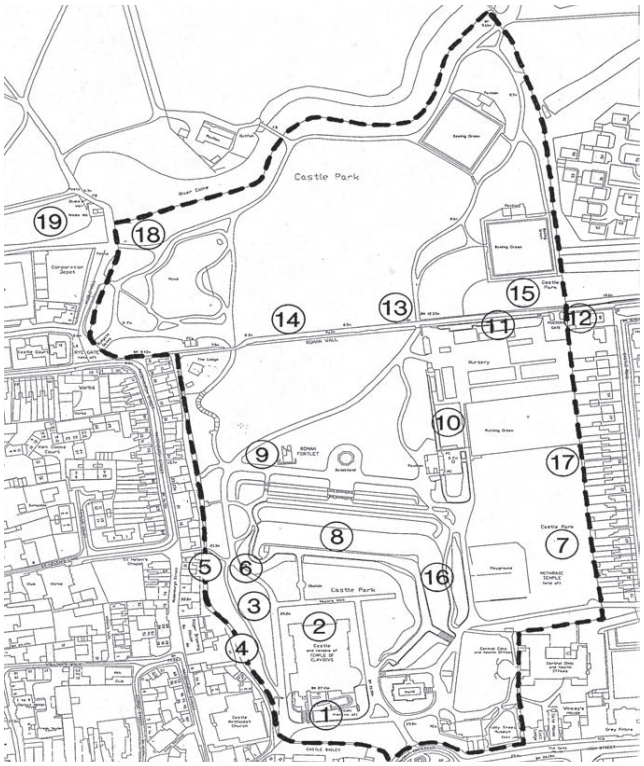


Figure A1
Archaeology: Visual/standing remains
(see Table 3)

Method of Assessment

Visible archaeological features in the park date mainly to the Roman and Norman periods and are indicated on Figure A1. Each of these features was assessed and the results are detailed in Table 1 Visible Archaeology Assessment. Many of the features are only partially visible above the surface and continue as buried archaeology identified in the gradiometer and resistivity surveys. Each feature was assessed in terms of:

- Visual influence in the park - a subtle or conspicuous feature?
- Sensitivity to development and existing features in immediate vicinity.
- Opportunities for improved management and maintenance, restoration, and interpretation.

Rationale for visibility assessment

The subtle archaeological features i.e. small areas of remains/ fragments, patterns, earthworks, and relationships, are generally lost to most observers unless help in perception and understanding is provided.

The visibility assessment was carried out for the following reasons:

- To establish where archaeological features make a significant contribution to the character of the Park and peoples experience of the Park.
- To establish the visual influence of features within the Park.
- To establish those areas of landscape in and around the park which are critical in providing a setting to archaeological features and monuments.
- To establish areas where there is inter-visibility between features, which presents opportunities for improved interpretation and understanding of relationships in space and time between features. The visual assessment of Castle Park was, therefore, used as a tool to develop a strategy for the restoration of the park which enhances the visitors' appreciation and discovery of its history.

Results

The zones of visual influence of the standing archaeological remains is indicated on Figure A2. This illustrates those features of greatest visual influence and those areas of the park which are sensitive to any development which may visually affect the character of the monument or its setting. The overlapping visual envelopes of each monument suggest

a framework whereby interpretation through inter-visibility between associated remains is possible. Equally it helps present to the visitor the complex overlaying nature and build up of archaeology on the site through time i.e. time depth. Table 3 sets out the sensitivity of each remain and puts forward opportunities and issues to be addressed.

Opportunities

This assessment has identified the standing archaeological remains and their sensitivities and opportunities. From this, strategies for the development of the site have been formulated to inform the design process. Strategies include:

- Feature is dominant and can be better interpreted and protected.
- Feature is not dominant and can be accentuated as a focal point and interpreted.
- Feature is not dominant and can be left as a subtle feature and interpreted for those people with greater interest.

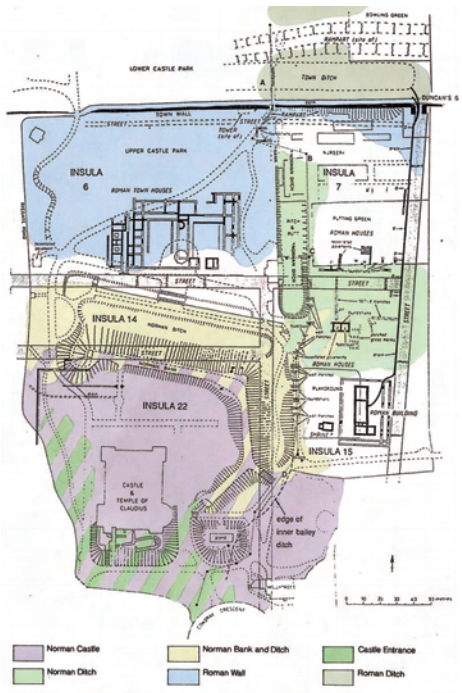


Figure A2
Archaeological features of the Park

Figure A2
Archaeological features of the Park

- Feature is not of great importance or has limited opportunities for improvement or should be left undisturbed as part of its management strategy. It is, therefore, protected and left as a subtle feature.

The following opportunities have been identified for the standing archaeology in Castle Park:

Duncan's Gate

This original Roman Gateway into the town of Colchester is located in the north-east corner of the park, enclosed by metal railings and overgrown with vegetation. With the exception of the Castle itself Duncan's Gate is arguably the most important single archaeological feature in Castle Park. Its location and current nature as an overgrown ruin, is an attractive part of its character and provides an important sense of age and decay. Its location next to other contemporary Roman features such as the Roman rampart, town wall and town ditch strengthen its significance and value.

As an original entrance into the Roman town it has potential to be reinstated as a gateway into the park which would provide people with a strong sense of arrival. It would set the scene for the understanding of the other features in its vicinity. However, the original part of the gateway tower has fallen and partially blocks the gateway. Footpaths either side of the masonry could be constructed leaving the masonry *in situ* and the sealed stratigraphy beneath it intact. Advice should be sought on the continued care and protection of the masonry from erosion. If Duncan's Gate is reopened for access then a new gate/railing would need to be constructed between the gateway in order to ensure a secure boundary to Upper Castle Park. The design and location of the gate/railing would need to be carefully considered to limit adverse visual and physical impact to the monument.

The close association of the gateway and other archaeological features presents an opportunity for the interpretation of all of these features and their relationships to one another.

Duncan's Gate offers an excellent opportunity to bring the interpretation of Roman Colchester to life by using it as the starting point for a Walk of the Roman Walls. The walk could link with a series of other walks being developed by the Museums Service for the exploration and interpretation of

many other facets of Roman Colchester, including the Roman Circus that has only recently been discovered not far from Castle Park. This close association could still be achieved if the gate was not reopened. However, without the new access route these features would be in an inaccessible corner of the Park where people would not necessarily go unless they had a specific interest. The gate and its associated features would, therefore, remain an undervalued and under used asset of the Park.

The possibilities of reconstructing the gateway are believed to be of little benefit. A restored gateway would be out of keeping with the associated structures of the town wall and rampart, which are themselves ruins.

The Roman Town Wall and Rampart

As discussed above these features lie in close proximity to Duncan's Gate. Although remains of the internal rampart occur elsewhere in Colchester, this portion of it is viewed as the most impressive and best-preserved section. It is, therefore, of considerable value. It also supports a valuable grassland habitat containing meadow/grassland species which once would have covered the area leading down to the River Colne.

Part of the rampart has been damaged by the Dutch barn and opportunities exist to reinstate this area.

Outside of the town wall lies the associated town ditch. Only part of this remains as a subtle earthwork in Lower Park. It is visually separated from the town wall and Duncan's gate by a hedge and railing. As a feature it gains much of its significance from its association to the wall and it is proposed that opportunities to reconnect these features as a complex of contemporary Roman remains be investigated.

A stronger sense of place and character could be created here utilising these features. However, any development in this area would need to consider the nature conservation value of the flower-rich grassland currently existing on the rampart, and the lichens on the town wall. In addition safety issues and restricted access onto the rampart would have to be considered.

Linkage of other Roman Features in the Meadows

The Roman drain physically connects Duncan's Gate with buried Roman remains in Hollytrees Meadow. The possibility of exposing the drain as the linking element for interpretation should be considered. However, this should be balanced with the current and further requirements of visitors to the park. Possibilities identified are:

- Leave archaeology as buried and allow recreational equipment and activities remain above.
- Remove all recreation equipment that is currently out of keeping and poorly located and develop more sensitive amenities which include presentation, but not excavation, of archaeological remains.
- Remove all recreation equipment, excavate and expose all remains and interpret as a Roman site.
- Remove existing recreation equipment and develop more sensitive amenities in which parts of the ruins can be excavated and presented within a new complementary context.

The linkage of exposed Roman remains with Duncan's Gate and the Town Wall will increase appreciation of their significance in an imaginary way, linked to other Roman sites within Colchester, in co-ordination with the shared objectives of the Museums Service.

The Roman Town Houses

These remains lie to the west of the bandstand and are subtle features that can go unnoticed to the passer-by. Their subtle nature is in fact part of their charm although they are in need of repair and interpretation. It may be possible to make visual connections to the Roman Town Wall and there are opportunities to portray archaeological layers of deposits and to identify the original Roman ground level passing beneath the Norman Castle. Also, information on the excavation of these features and others in the 1920s by Sir Mortimer Wheeler could be presented. Their interpretation would be improved considerably if people could appreciate the area of the house they were looking at on the ground, and if the approach to the remains was on an original path from the Roman street. Otherwise the subtle nature of these

features, and their visual isolation limits their potential for increased recognition. Past excavation in the area of the town houses has revealed that there is an extensive area of remains beneath current ground level. However, it is believed that exposure of these remains would not significantly improved interpretation and understanding and would conflict with the current use of the area particularly in summer. Any development in the surrounding area would need to consider possible impacts on their setting which is already fragmented by features such as the wall of the Avignon Garden.

Outer Temple Precinct Wall

This area of wall is only partially exposed. The existing footpath breaks through the line of the wall connecting the immediate area surrounding the Castle to the rest of the park. This footpath provides one of the most dramatic views of the Castle approached though the original line of the earlier Roman temple precinct. The path, as it breaks though the line of the precinct wall, is a threshold into the Castle Bailey. It is at this point that the continuity of the site as a place of importance in both the Roman and Norman times connect. Opportunities exist to emphasise this point through interpretation and design. Themes to be investigated could include the reuse of the site through the ages, the build up of archaeological deposits and Roman ground level disappearing beneath the Castle. Interpretation could link with existing displays within the Castle that discuss the principles of archaeology and deposits.

Excavations in the 1950s through the Norman rampart revealed the north east corner of the Roman Temple Precinct Wall. Opportunities exist to indicate the alignment of the precinct wall through the use of visual markers. A Roman drain lies to the west of the Temple precincts wall and currently is a subtle feature tucked into the flower beds. There may be opportunities to make a connection between this site and the precinct.

Norman Castle and Ramparts

The Norman Castle dominates the park. Set within attractive grounds created as part of Gray's garden it still has a close association with the ramparts that are equally dominant from the rest of the Park. Opportunities exist to enhance the understanding and appreciation of this structure; in particular the external pattern of stonework on the castle can be interpreted to illustrate the various phases of its construction. Currently the area between the Castle and the rampart on the northern side of the Castle is a well defined spaced, sheltered by the Castle and the avenue of trees planted as part of Gray's garden. It is, however, dissected by a series of paths which, though creating an inner circular walk around the castle, do not perform any important function. Their removal would improve the setting of the Castle, while the outer path network that leads onto the top of the rampart would still provide a circular walk around the Castle from which its various phases of construction could be interpreted. The excellent elevated views from this location also help to place the Castle in its wider landscape context.

In 1683, John Weeley attempted to pull the Castle down by extracting sand from the Roman vaults beneath the Castle. In order to remove the sand, he cut a cartway though the foundation wall near the north-east corner of the Castle.

The Gradiometer survey has revealed an area of disturbed ground thought to relate to this cartway. Currently, there is no disabled access into the vaults of the Castle and the Museum is keen to find ways to achieve this. The reopening of the Weeley cartway could provide disabled visitors an opportunity to explore the vaults. If this was to be achieved a path and cutting, and retaining wall would need to be constructed to connect exterior ground level with the ground level of the vaults. It could be located close up against the edge of the Castle to minimise visual impact. This development would provide an opportunity to investigate evidence of Saxon occupation, and the existence of bailey buildings in this area (although the gradiometer survey did not identify the presence of any bailey buildings). Further investigation into the potential impact on buried archaeology, the preservation of the Castle wall and foundations if exposed by cutting, and potential visual impact on the Castle setting will be required.

The entrance into Castle Park though Museum Street provides a very dramatic point of arrival. In this area of the park it is possible to appreciate the existence of other buildings which once stood in the Castle bailey, the foundations of which remain in the ditch in front of the southern face of the castle. There are opportunities here to provide interpretation of bailey buildings; the use of the site in Saxon times i.e. the chapel building; and the continuation of remains under the existing

rose beds to the south. The setting of the foundations of buildings within the ditch and the façade and entrance to the castle could be improved by the removal of the steps to the left hand side of the Castle bridge. These steps pre-date the bridge as a means of accessing the castle and are now redundant. Their removal would not prevent free access for visitors to the remains in the ditch.

Ramparts and Ditches

The Norman ramparts and ditches are visually dominant features of Castle Park and significantly shape the spatial experience and appreciation. Their existing profile is likely to have been altered, the Norman ramparts originally being more irregular in profile. They have, over time, suffered erosion and damage from vegetation growth and recreational activities and their conservation and management is of great importance. In particular the eastern slopes suffer erosion and surface slippage. It is recommended that shallow rooting plants be used in this area to stabilise the surface of the rampart. Plants such as rhododendron and azalea would be appropriate.

Restricting access onto the northern rampart particularly after snow when it becomes popular for sledging is an on-going concern. It is recommended that the following are considered:

- Seeding taller grass mix on the slopes which make sledging difficult.
- Increase security after snow and for as long as the snow lasts to prevent those tempted to sledge.
- Erect a temporary non-visually intrusive barrier during times of snow and remove when the snow has melted.

Opportunities exist to provide interpretation of the construction of the ramparts over the existing Roman buildings (as revealed in the excavations in 1950), and thus continue the theme of overlaying periods of occupation.

Outer Bailey Ditch

The Outer Bailey Ditch is a shallow earthwork that separates the higher ground level of Upper Castle Park from the lower level Nursery Site. The earthwork cuts through the Roman street which runs east-west and thus post-dates it and is believed to have been built in the 13th century. Little is know of this ditch and it may contain interesting statigraphy relating to occupation of the area post 13th century. It is a subtle historic feature and it is important to retain its profile. Any development in this area should give consideration to this, and if possible further resistivity survey work should be carried out.

4.4 Buried Archaeology - Excavations and Survey Information

Archaeological excavation reveals, with certainty, the extent and depth of buried archaeology. Over the years a number of excavations have taken place within Castle Park, and an assessment of the associated excavation has provided information on buried archaeology and its depth below current ground level. Excavations, however, have only covered a relatively small area of the Park. Gradiometer and resistivity surveys were, therefore, also carried out in order to provide additional information particularly for those areas of the park where no excavations have taken place.

The Gradiometer Survey

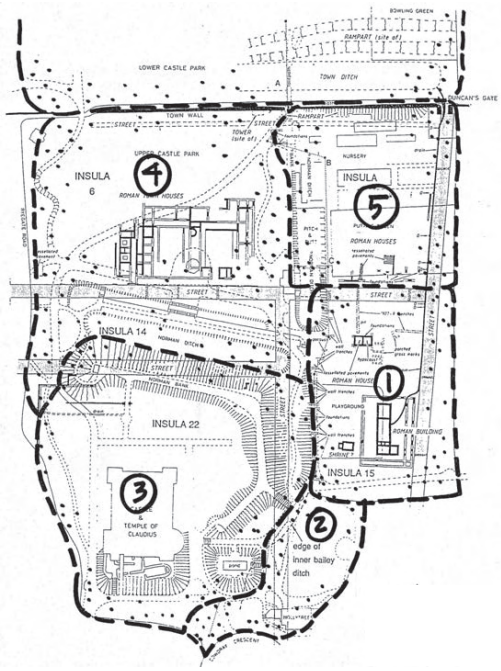
A gradiometer survey was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust in September and October 1998 to identify and confirm the presence of buried archaeology in Castle Park. The survey focused primarily on Upper Castle Park but also covered a strip approximately 80 metres wide from the Roman town wall to the River Colne in Lower Castle Park. The large amounts of metal within the park caused a significant amount of 'background noise' which unfortunately obscured readings and made it more difficult to interpret the results.

Resistivity Survey

A resistivity survey was carried out in Upper Castle Park. It covered the area of Hollytrees Meadow, from the children's playground to the east wall and south to the putting green. This survey was carried out in October and November 1998 by Peter Cott.

Synthesis of Material

Information from the above three sources has been pulled together to identify the main areas of known buried archaeology and its depth below ground level. The Park has been divided into six areas as follows and detailed on Figure A3:



1 Hollytrees Meadow
2 Hollytrees Lawn
3 Inner Bailey
4 Upper Park - Avignon Gardens to Roman Town Wall
5 Nursery Site and Putting Green

Figure A3
Buried archaeology areas

1. Hollytrees Meadow

Previous excavations in this area have revealed a Roman Shrine, possibly the 'Mithraeum', the foundations of other buildings, and a drain adjacent to the north south street. We know from photographs of the 'Mithraeum' taken by Drummond Lovell when it was exposed, that the south wall of the building currently lies just 20cm below existing ground level.

Similarly the grates over the Roman drain in the meadow demonstrate the depth of this feature, and the fact that some of the Roman building foundations show as patch marks in the grass in the summer indicates their close proximity to the surface.

A sewer pipeline was cut through the park to the west of this area in the 1980s. Survey work of the trench provided concrete information on the depths of archaeological features. Roman pavements, walls and foundations were between 35 and 45cm below the existing ground level and it is likely that these depths continue to the east across the meadow.

The gradiometer survey confirmed the presence of the 'Mithraeum' and north-south street and drain. The resistivity survey confirmed the location of the 'Mithraeum,' north-south street, drain and the east-west street. Interestingly it also demonstrated the presence of significant structures (probably building foundations) between the children's play area and the putting green.

The remains in this area of the Park appear to be mainly Roman in date and comprise a mixture of both public and domestic buildings. Archaeological features lie close to the surface and make this area of the Park particularly sensitive.

2. Hollytrees Lawn

The higher elevation of this area of the Park indicates that much of the Roman archaeology is sealed by topsoil and other debris from landscape works. The laying of the sewer and investigations of the trench revealed the line of the inner Norman bailey ditch not visible on the surface. It was traced in two main lengths for a total of just over 100m. The edge of the ditch was gently sloping and was not excavated beyond a depth of 2.75m. It is not clear how close to the existing ground level this feature is. However, the excavation report does record a significant (2m) layer of stonemason's rubble (probably 20th century in date) to the south of the pond which would indicate that there has been a build up of more recent material in this area, sealing both Norman and Roman features. The gradiometer survey revealed some interesting anomalies interpreted as tree root holes remaining, possibly, from trees planted by Gray in front of Hollytrees Mansion. However, there are no records of Gray planting trees in this location. No other features were recorded which may confirm that archaeology is buried more deeply here.

Remains from the Roman and Medieval periods in this area are likely to be covered by a significant layer of more recent material and are less vulnerable to surface development and gardening activities.

3. Inner Bailey

Excavations both at the southern side of the Castle and in the north-west corner of the Norman rampart have provided information on the depth of Norman and Roman remains in this area of the park. Excavation of the Norman rampart in the 1950s revealed the north-west corner of the outer wall of the Roman Temple Precinct. These excavations indicated that within the north-east corner of the bailey the Roman occupation level is approximately 1 metre from the surface ground level. This, when coupled with information from excavations carried out on the chapel at the front of the Castle, revealed the Roman occupation level to be 2.85 metres below ground level. Thus within the bailey there is less depth of more recent deposits in the north-east corner compared to south of the Castle, and the former is thus more sensitive to surface activities and development. To the north of the Castle the deposits have already been disturbed to some extent by landscape works and tree planting. However, despite the relatively shallow nature of deposits in this area the gradiometer survey only revealed one significant anomaly close to the north face of the Castle, which is thought to be the ditch dug by Weeley.

It is known that there were lean-to buildings against the west face of the Castle Keep in the 17th and 18th centuries which may have disturbed the Norman remains beneath, although generally little is known of the archaeology in this area. Howard Brooks (1998) estimated that Roman ground level is approximately 2.2 metres near the south-west corner of the keep and 1.2 metres near the north-west corner. West of this area is the possible denuded remains of the Norman bailey bank. Stratigraphy both within the bank and general ground to the west of the Castle may have suffered considerable disturbance from the lean-to buildings and construction relating to the 1892 opening of the Park.

Woodland walk to the east of the Castle is thought to contain the Inner Bailey Ditch. The stratigraphy within this ditch (now filled in) is likely to be of significant value, perhaps even the best potential location for surviving Medieval silts in the bailey ditch anywhere in the Park, especially since Gray deposited a large amount of soil in the ditch here, effectively sealing it.

4. Upper Park - Avignon Gardens, Bandstand to Roman Town Wall

The Avignon Gardens (formerly the ditch of the Norman ramparts) may contain the build up of material from the 11th century if Gray did not empty it to create a canal. North of the Avignon Gardens there are the exposed remains of the Roman Town Houses which demonstrate the proximity of the Roman ground level within this area. The gradiometer survey has revealed the continuation of one of the walls from these houses under existing ground level, as well as the location of the earlier excavated houses to the east of the bandstand.

A number of other linear features were also identified from the gradiometer survey but they were not recognisable archaeological features. Interestingly the gradiometer survey did not provide any firm information on the presence of other Roman houses to the north of the 'Wheeler Houses'. It is thought that Roman housing in this area would have needed to be terraced to accommodate the sloping ground. One would therefore expect remains to be fairly close to the surface here. This area is referred to as Sheepshead Meadow and is known to have been ploughed in the 17th century. It is, therefore, possible that Roman remains close to the surface have in fact been lost from this area.

5. Nursery Site and Putting Green

Excavations for the sewer trench passed to the west of this area revealing buried remains. Excavations at Duncan's Gate to the north-east and in the 1920s in the nursery site and beneath the putting green provide information on buried archaeology for this area.

The sewer trench revealed a number of buildings approximately 50 to 85cm below current ground level. It also revealed the ditch of the Outer Bailey, interpreted as approximately 10 metres wide and 1 metre deep, with a bank on its inner (west) edge, much reduced now, but surviving 5.5 metres wide and 0.6 metres deep. If this is the Outer Bailey it is the only archaeological evidence of it and thus is particularly sensitive and requires proper archaeological investigation.

Although the gradiometer did not provide any results for this area because of the interference from metal, it is likely that there are considerable Roman remains and, like the area to the west and Hollytrees Meadow, these remains are likely to

be fairly near the surface. The use of the area for the nursery and the putting green would indicate that archaeological deposits will have suffered some disturbance already. It will be important for a full archaeological assessment to be carried out here prior to any development to determine the extent and sensitivity of buried archaeology in more detail.

6. Lower Castle Park

Very little is known about the buried archaeology in this area. Chance finds have unearthed lead coffins and associated Anglo-Saxon burial objects. We also know that the Roman Town ditch ran on the northern side of the town wall and is likely to continue as a buried feature along its length.

The gradiometer survey confirmed the line of the Roman ditch and also identified a number of other curving features that may be related. They form a relatively large circular feature. However, there have been some landscape works undertaken in this area both in 1892 and after the Second World War, and the features identified in the gradiometer survey may not be archaeological. Equally, it is known that this area was once marsh (marsh species having been recorded on the Roman rampart not far from this area) and the curvilinear features may, therefore, represent former water channels to the River Colne.

Little is known about the use of this area from the Roman period onwards, and whilst the gradiometer has indicated some interesting features no firm conclusions can be drawn. This area of the park undoubtedly contains further information on the use of land outside the Roman town walls during the Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Medieval periods.

Conclusions

Most, if not all, areas of Castle Park contain buried archaeology, which not only provides important information on the development of the park through time, but also records its occupation and use. The gradiometer and resistivity surveys mainly confirmed areas of buried archaeology already recorded through excavation, and also revealed a number of other interesting features. It is the excavation record, however, which has provided the most concrete information on the type of buried archaeology and the depth at which it currently lies below ground level. This indicates that over most areas of the park there are remains (mainly Roman and Medieval) which lie close to the surface. In other areas there is little evidence of buried archaeology (Sheepshead Meadow) whilst in other areas there is a significant build up of more recent deposits and material that effectively seal and protect the archaeological record.

The excavations and survey work undertaken to date do not in themselves provide a full picture of buried archaeology but they do highlight the rich nature of the deposits within the park. Care should therefore be taken to ensure a high priority is given to the recording and protection of archaeological deposits and features in the event of any development.

Key Issue 3 - ARCH 3
To allow sufficient provision for an archaeological evaluation to be undertaken where visible and buried archaeology is impacted prior to preparation of development proposals; and, that the archaeology is recorded and/or protected as necessary as part of the proposals

4.5 Design Approach

All landscape and historic sites are changing and their evolution to the present day can often appear complicated.

The approach undertaken in this appraisal has presented opportunities to reinstate and reinforce original associations between archaeological features whilst still allowing for future changes to the Park. This approach helps to identify subtle historic features and highlight opportunities which might be overlooked. In addition this approach develops both site and setting to provide an enhanced experience for the visitor to an historic area. The visitor thus gains a deeper understanding and appreciation for subtle features and relationships.

It is essential therefore to establish links between features and to see them, not as isolated objects, but within their landscape context i.e. the Park. Section 3.0 has set out various approaches to particularly important areas of the park that contain visible archaeological remains. Below a broader approach is set out that considers the wider subjects of visitor management (i.e. circulation around the site), interpretation and ecology from the point of view of enhancing the historic appreciation, recreational use and continued conservation of Castle Park.

Key Issue 4 - ARCH 4
To ensure that footpath and design improvements to the Park consider means to visually and physically link features to enhance visitor appreciation and understanding

Visitor Management

The design of footpath networks around a site can provide stimulating experiences for the visitor without producing detrimental effects on the historic fabric and atmosphere of the site. Careful site planning and design of the historic landscape, helps visitor orientation, smooth visitor flows, and limits physical erosion of archaeology, congestion and more loss of site atmosphere.

Ecology

Historic sites and their settings often contain rich wildlife habitats, which can make a very real contribution to nature conservation whether they be grassland, woodland, wetland, buildings, ditches or walls. In recent years the ecological value of historic sites has been recognised as providing a refuge for plants and animals that may have difficulty surviving elsewhere. Many subtle historic features which occur in the setting of a site are invariably linear elements that act as links between similar habitats i.e. the Roman town walls or ditches.

Key Issue 5 - ARCH 5
To protect and manage important habitats associated with archaeological features

Interpretation

The significant opportunities presented to bring the wealth of archaeology and associated layers of history to life through creative interpretation should be taken to increase visitors understanding and appreciation of the value of the Park, and the increase the range of audiences.

The interpretation strategy should be developed in partnership with the Museums Service not only for those elements within the Park, but linked to other important historic sites elsewhere in Colchester to enhance visitor experience.

Visibility, accentuation, design manipulation can be used to enhance interpretation of archaeological features and areas. This can be achieved by circulation patterns, ground surface design, enhancing the sense of arrival or experience of space that is related to the archaeology of the area.

In addition there are the traditional interpretation aids which can be used and could include:

Interpretation boards - carefully sited and constructed - provides information to all visitors - appropriate for most significant archaeological areas.

Leaflets - creation of heritage trails that describe the visible and buried remains of an area - can cover both conspicuous as well as subtle features in the Park.

Guided tour of park using tape - recorded information, this has the benefit of providing audio-visual sound effects and thus recreating atmosphere. Issues of security of equipment would have to be considered carefully.

Key Issue 6 - ARCH 6
To improve the presentation, setting and interpretation of visible archaeological features to enhance visitor knowledge and experience

4.6 Summary of Key Issues for Archaeology Conservation in Castle Park

The following is a summary of the Key Issues identified in this section. Together they form a strategy for dealing with the archaeology when preparing restoration and development proposals for the Park.

ARCH 1
To conserve and protect standing archaeological remains

ARCH 2
To limit the impact of development on archaeology recognising the heritage value of the Park, and to enhance practical conservation skills and knowledge

ARCH 3
To allow sufficient provision for an archaeological evaluation to be undertaken where visible and buried archaeology is impacted prior to preparation of development proposals; and, that the archaeology is recorded and/or protected as necessary as part of the proposals

ARCH 4
To ensure that footpath and design improvements to the Park consider means to visually and physically link features to enhance visitor appreciation and understanding

ARCH 5
To protect and manage important habitats associated with archaeological features

ARCH 6
To improve the presentation, setting and interpretation of visible archaeological features to enhance visitor knowledge and experience

Table 3 Visible Archaeology Assessment
To be read in conjunction with Figure A1 Visual/Standing/Remains

Reference	Archaeological Feature	Visual Influence	Sensitivity	Opportunities
1	Castle Keep (Grade II Listed Building)	Visually significant in local context. Entrance to Park. Context to south face of Castle.	Sensitive to bridge access to Castle. Access and interpretation of remains in ditch.	Removal of visual clutter such as steps. Interpretation of structures and layers of history.
2	North façade of Castle	Visually dominant northern area of the Park to Norman bank, and Upper Castle Park in winter.	Any development in this area.	Interpretation of building faces showing different phases/periods of work. Possible disabled access to vaults and Roman Temple, and analysis of deposits excavated.
3	West rampart Ditch	Little visual influence in Park.	Stratigraphy is important – tree planting damaging to deposits.	Excavate section through ditch. Possibilities to visually accentuate/ interpret line of bank.
4	Eighteenth Century Kerb Stones	Little visual influence as part buried and some missing possibly in flower beds.	Limited	Reinstatement and Interpretation.
5	Roman Drain entrance identified by Laver 1892 vaulted drain 20inches wide, 2ft 5inches high, tiles and septaina. Runds under walls of temple precinct. Traced 120ft east.	Limited visibility at present as amongst shrubs.	Limited as mostly buried.	Interpretation. Improve visibility of entrance, and possible line of drain under west bank. Improve railings/ improve means of restricting access.
6	Outer precinct wall of Roman Temple (Grade II Listed Building) runs beneath ramparts. Broken by Victorian footpath. Capped by modern concrete slabs.	Limited visibility but significant on approach to Castle from Upper Castle Park.	Flower bed development and obscuring of structures. Insensitive capping to wall.	Improved preservation. Increase exposure and line of wall. Interpretation and indication of which part of precinct wall one is looking at. Opportunities to use as a gateway to the Castle area.
7	Roman Drain	Little visual influence as mostly buried. Line is indicated on surface by pattern of grilles.	Development on Hollytrees Meadows may obscure line of drain altogether.	Possibilities to open up and provide interpretation as part of wider interpretation of Roman features on the site. Possibly in association with walk through site from Duncan's Gate.

Reference	Archaeological Feature	Visual Influence	Sensitivity	Opportunities
8	Northern Norman ramparts	Visually dominant from Upper and Lower Castle Park.	Sensitive over a wide area of the park both in terms of visual influence and setting. Access to bank and erosion issues.	Stabilisation of bank. Improve restricted access – possibilities of growing taller grasses on bank & improving nature conservation value.
9	Roman town houses – foundations and pavements (Grade II Listed Building) 4 panels of plain red tessera area = 14 by 7 yards.	Visually significant in local context. Visible from footpath and adjacent grass areas.	Any built development and planting in area.	Interpretation. Improved protection and restoration. Removal of plants damaging to paving surfaces.
10	Norman Ditch	Visually significant in eastern part of Park.	Inappropriate location of crazy golf. Changes in level lost and obscured by structures and planting.	Improve interpretation and visibility. Improve visual links to Castle. Remove crazy golf.
11	Roman rampart to Wall	Visually significant in area of Nursery.	Sensitive to building. Currently obscured by use of area as nursery. Very rare remains Stratigraphy and stability affected by sycamore. Ecologically sensitive area.	Careful removal of vegetation/ trees. Removal of inappropriate buildings. Possibilities for non-coarse tall grass species? Nature conservation interests improved. Restricted access.
12	Duncan's Gate	Visually significant in local area of footpath north of town wall and area of Nursery.	Development of access into the Park. Redevelopment of Nursery site, new built structures that may restrict visibility of gate. Lichens – ecological survey required prior to development.	Removal of fallen masonry, excavation of sealed stratigraphy, use of gate as additional access. Potential of gateway to act as a threshold into the Park and to highlight the historic development within the Roman Town Wall.
13	Tower on Roman Wall	Limited visibility – identified by change in brick pattern within the wall.	Sensitive to development that obscures its view – planting, mounding, building.	Interpretation.

Reference	Archaeological Feature	Visual Influence	Sensitivity	Opportunities
14	Roman Town Wall (Grade I Listed Building) composed of layers of septaria interspersed with courses of brick, core of rubble and cement. Approx 125 yards of wall within park 8-12ft high much of it has medieval and modern facing.	Visually significant from Upper and Lower Castle Park.	Visually sensitive to development within Upper and Lower Castle Park.	Interpretation. Enhancement of nature conservation interests and value.
15	Roman Town Ditch	Limited visual influence, significant in area of Lower Castle Park.	Development in eastern area of Lower Castle Park.	Interpretation. Improved management, grass species and nature conservation interest. Opportunities to improve visual connection between Town Wall, rampart and ditch by removal of hedge and railings.
16	Norman ramparts eastern side	Visually significant in eastern area of Hollytrees Meadow.	Sensitive to tree planting and obscured from view due to tree planting.	Interpretation. Management of existing vegetation and bank stabilisation.
17	Boundary Wall	Visually significant in eastern part of Park/ Hollytrees Meadow.	Sensitive to development in meadow.	Interpretation. Conservation and repairs. Protection of nature conservation value
18	World War Two Defences	Significant in North East corner of Lower Castle Park.	Limited sensitivity.	Interpretation.
19	Middle Mill	Significant at north-east entrance into Lower Castle Park.	Visually and physically sensitive to development associated with the entrance into the Park.	Interpretation increasing sense of arrival and focal point/landmark.