

ROCHESTER CASTLE



CONSERVATION PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY INTRODUCTION

The Paul Drury Partnership

Consultation draft: January 2009

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1 THE PURPOSE OF THE CONSERVATION PLAN

1.1 The Paul Drury Partnership was appointed in January 2006 to produce a Conservation Plan for Rochester Castle by English Heritage and Medway Council. The Plan is intended to build on the Conservation Statement drafted by Keevill Associates in 2003 and form the strategic conservation framework for a future development and management plan. The objective of the Plan was to:

- Understand the development of the site;
- Assess the cultural significance of the site;
- Identify issues affecting the cultural significance of the site; and
- Recommend conservation policies to guide the future management of the site.

1.2 The Plan was also to address the following specific issues:

- Whether the keep is an appropriate candidate for re-roofing and/or re-flooring;
- Inform the repair of the site of parts of it prior to re-use;
- Inform the future conservation strategy and day-to-day management of the site;
- Inform the preparation of a development and management plan for the site;
- Enable the compatibility of specific proposals to be tested against the conservation of the site's significance;
- Inform the introduction of improved health and safety conditions for visitors to the keep;
- Inform the introduction of facilities for people with physical disabilities to gain easier access to the keep.

1.3 The Conservation Plan covers the parts of the Castle owned by Medway Council, held in guardianship as a scheduled monument by English Heritage and managed by the Council under a local management agreement. Land and structures that historically formed part of the Castle that are not owned by the Council, such as the Boley Hill earthworks, the northern part of the Castle ditch that now lies within the boundary of properties on the High Street, and the sections of curtain wall that forms the rear boundaries of these properties, are not included within the *Issues and Policies* section of the plan. However, these areas are dealt with in the *Understanding* section as they form an integral part of the Castle and therefore must be considered in order fully to understand the place

Standing sections of curtain wall outside the Council's ownership are also included in the *Gazetteer* for the same reason.

2. THE STRUCTURE OF THE PLAN

The Rochester Castle conservation plan consists of three sections:

Part I - *Understanding and Significance*: An account of the development of the Castle, leading to an evaluation of the likely original form of the keep and a discussion of the major theories, current and past, as to its layout and use. This is followed by an assessment of the significance of the various cultural heritage values attached to the Castle.

Part II – *Issues and Policies*: An outline of the issues that could threaten the significance both of the Castle as a whole and of individual elements within it, suggesting policies to address these, as well as identifying opportunities for beneficial change.

Part III – *The Gazetteer*: A room-by-room survey documenting the historic development, current form and significance of individual elements within the Castle. This is divided into two volumes, Volume I covering the curtain walls, castle ditch and bailey, and Volume II, covering the keep. An appendix collects together the known historic images of the Castle.

3. PREPARATION

3.1 The *Understanding* of the Castle and the *Issues and Policies* section of the *Conservation Management Plan (parts I and II)* have been prepared by Richard Peats and Paul Drury of The Paul Drury Partnership. The *Gazetteer (part III)* has been prepared by Jill Atherton, Peter Seary and Paul Bennett of the Canterbury Archaeological Trust, with editorial input from Richard Peats. The appendix of historic images was prepared by Richard Peats.

3.2 The writing of the plan involved extensive consultation at every stage. Management of the production of the plan was overseen by a steering group consisting of Simon Curtis, Rebecca Rees, Allan Cox and Edward Sargent, representing Medway Council, and Karen Richardson, Roy Porter Peter Kendall representing English Heritage, who regularly met The Paul Drury Partnership during the production of the plan and reviewed emerging drafts. Ian Tribe, from the Design and Surveying section of Medway Council, and John Guy, a local historian representing Tourism South-east, also participated in these meetings. Judith Roebuck, Ancient Monuments Inspector at English Heritage, South-East Region, and the Right Reverend Adrian Newman, Dean of Rochester Cathedral, were consulted informally during the production of the draft plan.

- 3.3 The draft conservation plan was presented to a seminar attended by selected Medway Council Officers and Councillors and representatives from King's School, Rochester Cathedral, the Guildhall Museum, the City of Rochester Society and Medway Renaissance on 12 July 2006. A further seminar, attended by Councillors and Council Officers, and English Heritage regional staff and architectural historians, took place on 03 October 2006. A further, informal, presentation and seminar was delivered to English Heritage architects and surveyors on the 12 October 2006. The draft plan was reviewed in response to comments received during these seminars and written comments from English Heritage. A draft was issued in January 2007. Following a period of consideration, Medway Council and English heritage have made some amendments, contained within this final draft, now ready for consultation and adoption.

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 4.1 The Paul Drury Partnership would like to thank the following people for their assistance in preparing the plan:

Simon Curtis, Rebecca Rees, Ian Tribe, John Croucher, Allan Cox, Tracy Stringfellow and Edward Sargent of Medway Council; the staff of Medway Archives; John Guy of Tourism South-East; Peter Kendall, Karen Richardson, Roy Porter and Judith Roebuck at English Heritage; and the Right Reverend Adrian Newmann, Dean of Rochester Cathedral. Particular thanks are due to Tim Tatton Brown, John Goodall and Jeremy Ashbee for allowing The Paul Drury Partnership access to their papers on Rochester in advance of publication.

5. A SUMMARY OF THE CONSERVATION PLAN

5.1 The historical development of Rochester Castle (Part I)

- 5.1.1 There is evidence of occupation on the site of the Castle during both the Roman and Saxon periods. The line of the south and west curtain walls corresponds to that of the Roman defences, and sections of Roman masonry are visible at the base of the west curtain wall. What went on inside the walls is unclear, as the site remains largely unexcavated. However, a small excavation in 1975 suggests that this may have been the site of the *mansio*, an official rest house or inn. During the Saxon period, the Castle site was the property of the Cathedral. There is evidence for middle-Saxon occupation and the division of the northern part of the site into tenements shortly before the conquest.

- 5.1.2 The first defences on the Castle site (period 1) were erected shortly after the conquest by Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, Earl of Kent, and half brother of William I, and consisted of a simple earth and timber ring-work that

roughly corresponded to the current line of the curtain walls. It is likely that the earthworks still extant on Boley Hill are contemporary and formed a second bailey. Odo rebelled against William II in 1088 and was besieged in Rochester by Royalist forces. He sought terms and forfeited his lands in England, the Castle passing to the King. The earth and timber ramparts of the ring-work (but not the Boley Hill earthwork) were translated into stone by bishop Gundulf of Rochester in 1089 (period 2), as payment in kind for the Manor of Haddenham. Walls of this era still stand on the west side of the curtain.

- 5.1.3 In 1127, Archbishop William de Corbeuil of Canterbury was granted constablership of the Castle in perpetuity and built the massive rectangular keep between 1127 and 1141 (period 3). As built, this would have been a more regular structure than is seen today, with square towers at each corner. The main body of the keep was divided into four floors, with a cross-wall running east-west, dividing each floor into two principal chambers. The most important space was on the second floor, where the cross wall was pierced by an arcade and both chambers surrounded by a mural gallery. The interior was richly decorated, at second and third floor level.
- 5.1.4 Much of the research undertaken as part of the conservation plan has aimed to understand the form of the keep before the damage inflicted in the siege of 1215. It has long been apparent that there was originally a large arched opening filling the east end of the southern chamber on the third floor. Traces of similar arched openings were identified at second and first floor level, the level of the second floor mural gallery being raised to clear the top of the arch below. There are traces of a division that has been interpreted as a transverse arched opening dividing the southern chamber on the second floor. Originally, the keep was covered with two high pitched roofs.
- 5.1.5 Little is known about 12th century domestic planning and scholarly opinion is divided about the way in which the keep was used. Compared with later medieval domestic plans, the layout appears illogical and there was an oversupply of public spaces compared with private spaces. This has led to the suggestion that there were two suites, each consisting of a hall and chamber, one for the King on the second floor, and one for the Archbishop on the third floor. This is considered unlikely, as the entire second floor appeared to be a public space, overlooked by galleries. The provisional interpretation put forward in the Plan is that the ground floor was used for storage and the first floor was used as a waiting chamber and constable's hall. The second floor was used as a great hall, with a ritual focus on the lost arch in the south-east corner. This could be used flexibly, with a timber screen, which was almost immediately translated into stone, filling the lower part of the arcade and doors in the mural gallery regulating access between the south and north sides of the keep. The third floor

received a more complex decorative treatment, but was smaller in scale, suggesting a high status private apartment, the north side being a private room and the south side, with its arched opening, a presence chamber.

- 5.1.6 The keep forms part of a group of tower keeps divided by cross-walls that originated with Loches (built between 1013 and 1035) and ended with Dover (built 1180-81). Of these, Rochester is one of the largest, most complicated and most elaborately decorated and best preserved, placing it among a handful of the most important 12th century keeps. Its closest relative, Hedingham, appears to be a smaller copy of the Rochester type; its successor, Dover, while larger and more complex, is less richly decorated and has been altered during the late medieval and early modern periods.
- 5.1.7 In 1215, war broke out between King John and a group of leading nobles. The Castle was seized by a rebel noble, William de Albini, and besieged by the King in October and November of that year (period 3a). The bailey fell within a couple of days and the defending garrison withdrew to the keep. John's engineers dug a surface mine against the south wall of the keep and brought the south-east corner tower down. The defenders retreated to the cross-wall that divided the Castle into two, but, reduced to a diet of horseflesh and water, were forced to capitulate.
- 5.1.8 Between 1223 and 1256, the Castle was repaired and transformed into a sumptuous royal residence (period 4). The south-east corner of the bailey, which had presumably been destroyed by the fall of the corner of the keep, was rebuilt, with a drum tower at the corner and the bailey divided into two by a cross-wall. The keep was repaired, with a round tower at the south-east corner, but the elaborate decoration of the interior was not reinstated and it appears that the building was used as a barracks and store. A set of royal apartments were built against the west wall of the bailey, traces of which are still visible in the curtain walls.
- 5.1.9 This phase of the Castle's life was short. The Castle was held for the King by John, Earl Warenne and Roger de Leybourne against Simon de Montfort and Gilbert de Clare in the Baron's war of 1264. Again, the bailey fell quickly, but the keep held until de Montfort and de Clare raised the siege, fearing that the King and his son (the future Edward I) were marching against them. No attempts were made to repair the Castle after the siege and it was left to decay for a little over 100 years (period 5). The buildings in the bailey gradually collapsed and it is likely that Boley Hill passed into civilian occupation at this time.
- 5.1.10 The Castle was brought back into use between 1367 and 1377 (period 6), when the keep was refurbished and the western curtain wall rebuilt, with two new mural towers and a large multi-tiered gatehouse to the north-east., The bailey buildings were not rebuilt, however, and the Castle seems to have functioned as a ceremonial, garrison and administrative centre rather

than a residence, the King preferring to lodge with the priory. The final phase of medieval development took place between 1378 and 1397 (period 7), when the north-west bastion was added during the reign of Richard II as a water gate and firing platform to protect the bridge over the Medway, which had recently been rebuilt closer to the Castle. The Castle was stormed and damaged during the peasants' revolt of 1381.

- 5.1.11 The decline of the Castle began during the 16th century (period 8), when the construction of a house for Henry VIII in the former cloister of the Cathedral replaced the royal lodgings within the priory, sections of the castle ditch were leased by the corporation to townspeople from 1564, and stones were robbed from the Castle to build Upnor Castle in 1599-1601. The Castle appears to have remained in use as a courthouse until the early 17th century and was granted to Sir Anthony Weldon by James I in 1610. It did not take part in the English civil war and the keep was gutted by fire before 1670. Slow decay continued during the 18th century, by the end of which the bailey had been divided into detached gardens associated with nearby town houses and the Castle ditch had been divided and built over.
- 5.1.12 The Corporation of Rochester obtained a lease on the Castle from the Earl of Jersey (a descendant of Anthony Weldon) in 1870 and bought the Castle outright in 1884 (period 9). The Corporation transformed the bailey into a public park, with formal landscaping, and demolished the remains of the gatehouse. The keep and west curtain wall was extensively repaired and consolidated by George Payne between 1896 and 1904. Between 1919 and 1931, the formal landscaping was gradually replaced by grass. By 1961, only the paths and the base of the bandstand remained of the park. At the same time, it became apparent that major structural repairs were required, which were beyond the means of the Corporation. The Castle was placed in the guardianship of the Ministry of Works in 1965 and the keep extensively consolidated. The eastern side of the Castle ditch was cleared of housing between 1962 and 1965. The forebuilding was roofed and floored in 1986 and day-to-day control of the Castle was handed back to the Council, under a local management agreement, in 1995. Roofing the keep has been proposed twice, in 1970 and 1995, when proposals progressed as far as submitting a planning application.

5.2 Significance (part I)

5.2.1 In accordance with the draft English Heritage *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance*, the significance of the Castle is articulated as the sum of the heritage values of the site. These can be considered under four headings:

- Evidential values: The potential of the built fabric of the Castle to yield primary evidence about past human activity;
- Historical values: the way in which the Castle provides a means of connecting the present to past people, events, and aspects of life, both by illustrating important aspects of military and social history, and through its association with notable people and events;
- Aesthetic values: the way in which people derive sensory and intellectual stimulation from the Castle; and
- Communal values: the meaning of the Castle for the people who identify with it and whose collective memory it holds.

5.2.2 The following grading system has been adopted to enable the relative weights of the values contributing to the significance of the Castle and its setting to be compared:

A: *Exceptional significance*

Elements whose values are both unique to the Castle and are relevant to our perception and understanding of castles in a national and international context. These are the qualities that, for buildings, warrant listing in grade I.

B: *Considerable significance*

Elements whose values contribute to the Castle's status as a nationally important place. These are the qualities that justify statutory protection at national level.

C: *Some significance*

Elements whose values make a positive contribution to the way the Castle is understood and perceived, primarily in a local context.

D: *Little significance*

Elements whose values contribute to the way the Castle is perceived in a very limited, but positive, way.

N: *Neutral significance*

Elements which neither add to nor detract from the significance of the Castle.

INT: *Intrusive*

Elements of no historic interest or aesthetic or architectural merit, that detract from the appearance of the Castle, or mask the understanding of significant elements.

5.2.3 The key aspects of the Castle's significance can be summarised as follows:

- The medieval fabric of Rochester Castle is of exceptional significance (**A**) as an example of medieval military and domestic architecture. The significance of the keep has an international dimension, due to close parallels with continental castles. It functions not only as an important primary source of information for this period, but has the ability, due to its excellent state of preservation and lack of later alterations, to illustrate wider aspects of medieval life.
- The architectural and artistic qualities of the keep are of exceptional significance (**A**). This is manifested in its original design, which has acquired an iconic nature as an archetype of 12th century keeps, and the craftsmanship employed, which can be equated with the finest buildings of its age.
- The Castle has the ability to connect the wider public with aspects of medieval life, through providing a tangible link with the past that is capable of being imagined or reconstructed relatively easily. To an extent, however, this is limited by the Castle's lack of internal structure.
- The buried archaeological remains are potentially a valuable source of information about Roman and Saxon Rochester, the development of towns during these periods, and of domestic life in castles. These should be treated as of considerable significance (**B**) until further evaluation reveals their full significance.
- The Castle's contribution to the local landscape is of considerable significance (**B**) as one of the two landmarks (the other being the Cathedral) that dominate the city.
- As the site of two important medieval conflicts, the Castle is of considerable significance (**B**) in that it has played a role in shaping the history and political institutions of the nation and provides a direct link with nationally known historical figures, including King John.
- The curtain walls have considerable (**B**) architectural and some (**C**) artistic significance as an attractive example of medieval building.
- The Castle has considerable significance (**B**) as a ruin, both in terms of the gaunt appearance of the exterior and the vertiginous qualities of the interior. While ultimately these qualities are dependant upon, and subservient to, the evidential value of the medieval fabric, they reference the decline of the keep's active use during the Early Modern period and have shaped the visitor's experience of the site since at least the 1660s.
- The presentation of the Castle as a public park represents the most recent layer of significance. While of some interest as an expression of civic pride, the varying quality and fragmentary nature of this work

means that their significance cannot be assessed as a whole. Individual elements have some significance (**C**), while others are intrusive (**INT**).

- Other than its significance as a landmark, community values consist of positive associations of some local significance (**C**).

5.3 Issues and Policies (Part II)

5.3.1 The first part of the *Issues and Policies* section looks at the general management of the Castle. It makes clear the need for the adoption of the Plan by both Medway Council and English Heritage in order that the Plan is used to inform management decisions, is regularly updated and is used as the basis for a Management Plan. It outlines the statutory regime that the Castle is under, makes clear the need for best practice, in terms of regular maintenance, the use of appropriate expertise, informed decision-making and recording of interventions, to be employed. In particular, the need for proper archiving of interventions is stressed, due to the failure adequately to record most 20th century works to the fabric.

5.3.2 These measures translate into the following policies:

Policy 1: The conservation policies recommended in this Conservation Plan will be endorsed by Medway Council and English Heritage as a guide to the future management of Rochester Castle.

Policy 2: The assessments of significance set out in this Conservation Plan will be used to inform decisions about the future management of the site.

Policy 3: The Conservation Plan will be reviewed within five years of its adoption. Further reviews should take place in the same five yearly cycle as the quinquennial surveys.

Policy 4: Responsibility for updating the Conservation Plan will rest with the Tourism and Heritage manager at Medway Council, or his functional successor.

Policy 5: English Heritage and Medway Council will, within three years, develop and adopt a Management Plan for the site based on the Conservation Plan.

Policy 6: Scheduled monument consent will be obtained before any works, not covered by a class consent, are undertaken within the scheduled area of the Castle. English Heritage will be consulted as part of the planning of any such works. Where such works will take place on a regular basis, they will be permitted in the context of a management agreement.

Policy 7: Further research, including a detailed survey of the Boley Hill earthworks, should be commissioned with a view to extending the area of the scheduled monument to include the entirety of the medieval castle earthworks.

Policy 8: Planning permission will be sought where necessary.

- Policy 9: Where works are proposed to the Castle's historic fabric, only consultants suitably qualified and experienced in working with the conservation of historic buildings and structures will be employed.*
- Policy 10: Contractors engaged to work on the Castle's historic fabric will be suitably qualified and experienced in conservation techniques.*
- Policy 11: To ensure a high standard of quality, works to the Castle will be monitored by English Heritage and/or the Council.*
- Policy 12: The historic fabric of the site will be cared for through a regime of cyclical preventative maintenance and prompt repair informed by a five yearly condition survey.*
- Policy 13: Maintenance access to significant elements of the site is at present difficult. Wherever possible, it will be reinstated and maintenance resumed.*
- Policy 14: Restoration should only be undertaken where it can be demonstrated to preserve or enhance an aspect of considerable or exceptional significance. Any restoration must be based on sound evidence and should be clearly discernible.*
- Policy 15: The removal of elements of considerable or exceptional significance will only take place when this is the only way in which to preserve the wider architectural and artistic significance or structural stability of the Castle, for instance, the necessary replacement of stone during repair and consolidation work. The removal of elements of some significance may be justified to reveal or reinforce aspects of considerable or exceptional significance, providing the benefit decisively outweighs the loss. Otherwise, removal should be restricted to intrusive elements or those of little or neutral significance.*
- Policy 16: Elements identified as intrusive in this Conservation Plan should be removed or modified when the opportunity arises.*
- Policy 17: Major adaptations, alterations and additions will only be permissible where they reveal and reinforce the significance of the Castle as a whole. Where such changes apply to elements of exceptional or considerable significance, they should be reversible.*
- Policy 18: Where resources permit, research should be targeted to reduce gaps in the understanding of the date, role and significance of the site's elements.*
- Policy 19: An archive documenting interventions at the Castle will be deposited with and maintained by the Medway Archives Office. This should include (but not necessarily be limited to):*
- Copies of any applications for scheduled monument consent.*
 - Copies of advice received from English Heritage in relation to any applications for scheduled monument consent.*
 - Copies of reports of any archaeological excavations, recording works or watching briefs relating to the monument.*
 - Copies of any investigative reports commissioned, including conservation plans and feasibility studies.*

- *Records of any repair and consolidation works to the fabric of the scheduled monument, including schedules of works and design/repair drawings.*
- *Records of any structures erected or demolished within the area of the scheduled monument.*
- *Records of any photographic or drawn surveys of any part of the monument.*

Policy 20: In the future, all excavation archives and significant excavated objects will be deposited at Medway Archives or the Guildhall Museum (both part of the Tourism and Heritage department) as appropriate, which will be responsible for properly cataloguing all items deposited. Should the Guildhall Museum not be in a position to take excavation objects, due to storage restrictions, English Heritage should take on responsibility for curating the objects. Significant objects previously recovered through excavation and existing excavation archives will be relocated to the Museum as the opportunity arises. Records concerning the built fabric of the Castle should be deposited with Medway Archives, which will also keep a duplicate copy of the excavation archives.

Policy 21: The Understanding section of the Conservation Plan will be used as a framework to guide and inform future archaeological and recording works.

Policy 22: A model brief will be prepared which will act as the basis for all future archaeological works. This should be prepared within six months of the appointment of the Castle Archaeologist.

5.3.3 The section then deals with the protection of the fabric. The first issue is the gradual, but cumulative, damage to buried archaeology that is likely to be taking place through the unplanned introduction of services and the driving of marquee and tent pegs during events. It is suggested that this is managed by the appointment of a Castle Archaeologist to advise on, and supervise, works and that an evaluation of the buried remains takes place in order to gain a better understanding of the nature and significance of these remains.

5.3.4 These measures translate into the following policies:

Policy 23: A Castle Archaeologist, with responsibility for supervising, organising and archiving archaeological work, will be appointed by the end of 2009.

Policy 24: Proposals for development or repair will be preceded by an archaeological assessment and, if appropriate, an evaluation of the area to be affected. Mitigation measures will be devised to minimise harm to significant below-ground remains. There should be a presumption in favour of the physical preservation of nationally important archaeological and architectural remains and their settings. This will include:

- *Establishing a clearer picture of the archaeological potential of the site via geophysical survey and limited area excavation;*
- *Drawing up a long-term services plan, including the mapping of existing services and the introduction of a new services ‘ring main’.*

Policy 25: A management agreement will be obtained to protect archaeological deposits during events. This will include:

- *Drawing up a plan for the erection of tents and marquees based on the results of the geophysical survey and archaeological investigations that avoids the areas of greatest archaeological potential*
- *Limiting the stakes used to secure tents and marquees to 300mm in depth*

5.3.5 The structural problems of the Castle are then analysed. The principal issue is the deterioration of the keep, both structurally and in terms of the loss of internal and external detail. It is vital that remedial action is taken as soon as possible in order to slow the rate of decay down. This would be best achieved by consolidating and waterproofing the wall tops and roofing the turrets to reduce water ingress. The removal of cementitious pointing from around the decorative stonework would also slow the deterioration of the most valuable stonework in the keep. It is also essential that a detailed record of all medieval decorative stonework is made. This would form a valuable template for any future stone repairs.

5.3.6 The obvious way of protecting the internal detail of the keep would be to roof it. However, this would have an adverse impact on the significance of the building as a ruin. Although in the ultimate analysis the detailing of the original fabric is of such importance that its protection should be given priority over the retention of the building as a ruin, roofing could only be considered acceptable if it was demonstrated that the internal stonework is indeed deteriorating as fast as is suspected. Given the lack of records from the past 50 years the rate of deterioration cannot be quantitatively assessed at present. Further investigation and analysis is required over a five-year period to determine the rate of decay. This research will be used to inform a long-term strategy for the conservation of the keep which will address the conservation needs of the keep while also paying due regard to the special interest of the building as a ruin.

5.3.7 These measures translate into the following policies:

Policy 26: The practice of descaling the keep at regular intervals will cease as it is contributing to the ongoing decay of the stonework. Health and safety considerations will be addressed in the short term by maintaining the present physical barriers, and by re-fixing loose stones and patch repointing as necessary.

Policy 27: The medieval fabric of the keep should be conserved and protected through consolidation, removal and replacement of cement pointing around decorative stonework, weatherproofing the wall tops, roofing the corner turrets and introducing drainage as soon as possible.

Policy 28: A five year monitoring programme will be undertaken to establish the rate at which the fabric of the keep is decaying and to fully understand the underlying causes of this. This will include:

- *Visual monitoring of water ingress;*
- *Chemical analysis of selected stones to determine the precise mechanisms of erosion;*
- *Measuring the rate of decay of mortar in the galleries.*

Policy 29: This understanding of the building will inform the development of a conservation strategy for the repair and consolidation of the keep which gives priority to the protection of the medieval decorative stone of the interior while paying due regard to the special interest of the building as a ruin. Any solution should deal with the source of the defect as well as any consequential damage done to the visible fabric.

Policy 30: A programme of selective stonework repair, to replace the minimum number of stones in order to maintain the current appearance of the building, should be devised and instituted.

Policy 31: When it is necessary to replace medieval stonework, works should be preceded by appropriate recording and suitable arrangements made for the conservation and storage of significant items.

Policy 32: A long-term programme of maintenance, particularly re-pointing and selective stonework replacement, shall be devised and implemented for the curtain walls.

Policy 33: The backlog of maintenance works to Tower three will be addressed

5.3.8 The final part of the plan deals with enhancing public perceptions and experiences of the Castle. While the preservation of the medieval fabric must take priority, it is acknowledged that increasing access to the keep would be desirable. There are several options: adding gantries, reinstating the original floor level and providing additional facilities in a lower basement, flooring half of the keep, or roofing the keep and flooring the whole building. Roofing and flooring the building would be controversial. While there would be considerable public benefit in terms of revealing the architectural significance of the keep the vertiginous quality of the interior, itself of considerable significance, would be lost.

5.3.9 These measures translate into the following policies:

Policy 34: The opportunity presented by works to consolidate and protect the keep to improve public access to the fabric will be taken. All such works would be incremental, reversible and modern in character.

The following possibilities will be explored:

- *The functional reinstatement of the south-west stair;*
- *The replacement of treads to both stairs;*
- *The reinstatement of original ground floor level.*

Policy 35: The architectural qualities of the keep will be preserved and where possible enhanced. Thus services, interpretive material or furnishings within the keep will be kept to an absolute minimum.

Policy 36: Measures to increase public access, disabled access and intellectual access to the Castle should be taken, whilst ensuring that harm to elements' significance, character and visual amenity is minimised.

Policy 37: Improved disabled access to the bailey should be pursued by improving the current Castle Hill entrance.

5.3.10 There appear to be several opportunities to improve the character and presentation of the bailey. These include marking the position of any excavated structures, maximising the potential of the mural towers and improving the appearance of the Castle Gardens, inspired by its late medieval form as an open, flexibly-used space.

5.3.11 This translates into the following policies:

Policy 38: Should the form of the bailey buildings become clearer, the opportunity will be taken to express the site and form of these structures as part of the landscaping in a manner that continues to enable the flexible use of this area for events.

Policy 39: More creative use will be made of the roofed mural towers. This could include occasional use as holiday accommodation, educational or site-related management use. The reintroduction of floors into tower two may be necessary to achieve this.

Policy 40: A development plan will be prepared for the Castle Gardens. This will outline a coherent strategy for enhancing this space.

5.3.12 There are also several opportunities to improve the setting of the Castle. These include improving the landscaping of the Castle ditch removing the car park, improving the relationship with the High Street by closing the gap site and using statutory powers to deal with unsightly clutter on surrounding buildings. The closure of Epaul Lane to traffic will be investigated in more detail, as will the occasional pedestrianisation of Boley Hill.

5.3.13 These opportunities translate into the following policies:

Policy 41: In the long term, improving the external appearance of the Castle by removing Boley Hill car park is desirable.

Policy 42: In the long term the external appearance of the Castle will be enhanced through improving the landscaping within the Castle ditch. This could include:

- *Reinstating the inner bank profile of the Castle ditch, against the curtain wall, by the addition of soil against exposed foundations;*
- *Revealing the remains of the original bridge to the north-east gate;*
- *Encouraging a more informal, meadow-like appearance of the Castle ditch, principally by relaxing the cutting regime;*
- *Planting a low-level shrub barrier at the back of the pavement of Boley Hill.*

Policy 43: The Council will encourage the owners of nearby buildings to ensure that their properties contribute towards an appropriate setting for the Castle. If necessary, statutory action, via a Section 215 notice, will be taken to facilitate this.

Policy 44: Existing key views into, from and within the Castle will be conserved. Opportunities will be sought to enhance key views towards and out of the site when they arise.

Policy 45: When the property market improves consideration will be given to releasing the gap site (between 48 and 56 High Street) for development informed by an agreed brief in order to restore the historic urban grain of the High Street in front of the Castle. Any building on this site must effectively address the Castle as well as the High Street and its design must contribute to wider proposals to increase connectivity between the Castle and town. Loss of disabled parking spaces may be mitigated by including them in the revised landscaping scheme for the Boley Hill car park.

Policy 46: The viability of the pedestrianisation of Epaul Lane will be further investigated.

Policy 47: Opportunities will be sought to create a pedestrian friendly environment around the Castle.

5.3.14 The conservation plan concludes by looking at priorities for action. The first priority must clearly be the consolidation of the keep and the setting up of a monitoring programme to assess the rate of deterioration of the building. Evaluating and protecting the buried remains in the bailey should be considered the second priority, after which the next priority should be addressing the backlog of repairs to tower three and setting up an archiving procedure. Other recommendations, while desirable are not urgent, and should be implemented when the opportunity arises.