Conservation Plan

CONTENTS

1. The Story of the Site

1933 Dorset County Council acquires Colliton House, the seven acres of Colliton Park and Wadham House at 50 High West Street[1] with the intention of building a new County Hall on this site to bring together staff working in a range of buildings across the County with core staff then occupying the Shire Hall and Stratton House, High West Street[2]. The new building was intended to have a central axial approach through the site of Wadham House, which would have been demolished, as would Colliton House after completion.[3]

1934-7 Preparation of plans for the new building and termination of grazing rights and removal of grazing animals from Colliton Park.[1] The difficulties of discovering what lies below the surface of a modern town on a historic setting and the opportunity this site gives to examine a large area of that town are recognised by the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society (DNHAS). They make a request to the Dorset County Council (DCC) to excavate the site in advance of the construction of County Hall because the foundations of the new building were to be based on the natural chalk below the site and all material above that would be removed. DNHAS appoint the Dorchester

Excavation Committee to oversee the work and raise funds. The County Council offers a substantial grant towards the cost of the project.[4]

1937 The County Council confirms its decision to build and agrees to the excavation of the site. Lt-Col C. D. Drew and K.C. Collingwood Selby direct the excavations with advice and support from Dr (later Sir) Mortimer Wheeler who had been excavating Maiden Castle since 1934. They are assisted by many of the archaeologists who had helped Dr Wheeler; one of the students on the excavation was R. J. C Atkinson, later Professor of Archaeology at Cardiff and excavator of Stonehenge.[8] They adopt the grid or box method of excavation. This requires that the Park be gridded and trial trenches dug along one edge of each 20 feet square grid. Where features of archaeological interest, such as walls or hard surfaces are encountered, the area is expanded. Each box is separated from its neighbour by a baulk, 3 feet wide.[6] Measured elevations of the walls of the boxes provide evidence of the detail and stratification of the site.

The first trial trench is cut on the 20th May 1937 and within two weeks remains are discovered. On approximately 3rd June the County Architect, H. E. Matthews ARIBA, designer of County Hall, suggests that the excavated material should be dumped in a hollow area in the North West corner of the Park, away from the actual building area. The excavation programme is re-organised to examine this area in the first season of excavation rather than later. The first trench of this rearranged excavation reveals part of the outer wall of the Town House. The limitations on space to place excavated materials results in substantial soil stockpiles to the east of the County Hall site in 1937-38. These were presumably levelled around the basements of County Hall to produce the ground levels seen in later years.[25]

The importance of the Town House and its state of preservation are soon realised and the desirability of keeping it permanently open is at once felt. DNHAS ask DCC to preserve the site. DCC agrees and offers a grant to carry out the necessary work.[4] The intention at this time includes the provision of a permanent structure over the west wing and the repointing of walls in the south wing.[7]

The site attracts numerous visitors during the excavation including archaeologists of eminence or who will later become eminent in their own right. These well known individuals included

- Sir George MacDonald, the excavator of many Roman military sites in Scotland and the Antonine Wall;
- Hugh Shortt, the Curator of Salisbury Museum;

- Alexander Keiller, the excavator of Windmill Hill and Avebury, and founder of the Avebury Museum;
- C.W. Philips, a field archaeologist of high repute and one time Archaeology Officer of the Ordnance Survey;
- Kathleen Kenyon, (later Dame Kathleen) a student of Dr Wheeler and the excavator of Jericho in the 1950s;
- Harold Mattingly, a Roman historian and numismatist of international repute;
- A. W. G. Lowther, he excavated with Dr Wheeler at Verulamium and was an expert on Roman brick, tile and building materials;
- Sir Cyril Fox, leading archaeologist and the author of 'The Personality of Britain' and the definitive works on Wansdyke and Offa's Dyke;
- Ivan Margary, expert on Roman roads in Britain and an archaeological philanthropist. He later purchased the Fishbourne Roman Palace site near Chichester and donated it to the Sussex Archaeological Society.

Their contributions of knowledge will have assisted the excavators at the time. Other eminent members of Society to visit included the American ambassador to Britain, Robert Worth Bingham, in 1937 and the Duchess of Kent in 1945. The visitors' book records all their signatures and donations made towards the public fund set up to support the excavation work.

1938 First interim report on the excavations at Dorchester is published in the Proceedings of the DNHAS. This includes a substantial description of the Town House. [4]

Excavation continues over the remaining County Hall site. Seven separate buildings are identified the most significant being the Town House.

The foundation stone of County Hall is laid on 26th September by the Right Honourable Anthony Ashley Cooper, 9th Earl of Shaftesbury PC, KP, GCVO, CBE, JP. Her Majesty's Lieutenant in the County of Dorset and Chairman of Dorset County Council.[12]

1939 Second interim report on the excavations at Dorchester published in the proceedings of the DNHAS[9]. The 2nd World War commences. Mr Selby is called up for military service.[2] The best finds seem to have been lodged with the museum almost immediately. However, all the remaining finds from the site are stored in paper sacks in the basement of County Hall.[10]

Some consolidation work is carried out on the Town House structure.

- Concrete is poured to fill voids and underpin the north and south walls of room 5.
- Part of the wall between rooms 6 and 7 is consolidated with concrete and rendered beside the door to room 7.
- The wall above the stoke hole to room 7a is rebuilt. A concrete haunch and concrete steps are poured round the stoke-hole 7a
- After the excavation of Pit A in room 17 the pit is backfilled and the hypocaust supports are rebuilt. Part of the west wall of this room must also have been rebuilt at this time. A concrete haunch is poured around the plan form of Stokehole 17a and steps put in. [11]

Otherwise the site is left to nature.

1940-57 Exactly what happened to the site in this period is difficult to establish but probably included the following;-

- The main foul drain to County Hall is constructed at deep level through the remains that had been discovered at the east end of the site i.e. room 20 and the associated well and pathway end.[12]
- Exposed mosaics are covered with soil except for room 8.[7]
- The collapsed wall jambs of the window in room 10 are rebuilt.[7]
- The north walls of room 4 are rebuilt and a columnette is erected to indicate the likely height and construction of the covered loggia.[12]
- The west and north walls of room 15 are rebuilt with some loss of mosaic.[7]
- The well is rebuilt.[12]
- The walls of the West and South wings are re-pointed with cement based grey mortars.[12]
- The upper embankments covering the Dorchester Town Walls are fenced off with metal posts and wire mesh and used as an allotment to grow food.[12]
- The excavations in Colliton Park become a focus for the educational side of the DNHAS's activities; large numbers of children and their teachers, evacuated to Dorchester from danger areas, are given conducted visits to Colliton Park and Maiden Castle and lectures are arranged for them in the Museum Library.[2]
- Areas within Colliton Park are used for defence training for local forces. One particular exercise spread over two days in 1944 demonstrates the dangers of, and how to deal with, Butterfly bombs.[13]

- The basements of County Hall are used as emergency bomb shelters.[13]
- On 8th June 1950 the Roman Town House is listed as a Grade I listed building. Colliton House and Wadham House are also both listed as Grade II* buildings and their preservation requested by the Ministry.[14]
- At some date prior to 1957 the site is scheduled as an ancient monument.[15]

1955 The construction of County Hall is completed on 27th May under the direction of J Hurst ARIBA, County Architect.[12]

1956 The County Hall building is dedicated by the Right Reverend John Maurice Kay, Lord Bishop Suffragan of Sherborne on 11th May 1956. [12]

1957 A timber structure with a glazed viewing window and a felted pitched roof is erected over the complete mosaic in room 8. Mosaic repairs are carried out in this room.[7] Some authorities state this mosaic was re-laid. An interpretation board is installed to the east of room 5. A set of steps and a handrail are erected to give pedestrian access to the site from the rear pathway into County Hall.[12]

1958-70 Ray Farrar, MA, FSA, working for the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, re-examines the records of the excavation and the site[7] and prepares an evaluation and new drawings of the monument that are published in the Inventory of Dorset Volume 2 part 3 (1970).[5]

1971-95 Plans to cover the site with a new record office or car parking are successfully resisted. Various site maintenance works are carried out.[7] From time to time members of the DNHAS clean the mosaic of room 8. Records of this work are held by the DNHAS.[16]

During the early 1980's Professor Michael Fulford of Reading University, is commissioned by the Dorset County Museum with grant aid from the British Academy to co-ordinate the preparation of material for a final report on the excavation. Mark Corney is employed to prepare an overall assessment of the stratigraphy of the site, and reports were prepared on the metalwork and the Samian ware from the site. The work could not be completed due to lack of funding.

1973 Maureen Putnam, working as an educational advisor in the County Museum, retrieves the finds left in the, now rather damp, basement of County Hall and arranges volunteers to pot wash and clean off the rotted paper bags.[10]

1996 The County Council's Amenities Committee requests that significant improvements should be made to the presentation of the site and

funds are made available to make a start anticipating a further injection of finance from the Heritage Lottery Fund.[7] The post and wire fencing, allotment use and old greenhouses are removed from the site.[12]

An assessment of what is required to complete publication of the final report on the site excavation is prepared by Jane Timby in collaboration with Professor Michael Fulford and Peter Woodward on behalf of Dorset County Council. This report produces an estimate of the cost of completing the final report. The cost of completing the final report cannot be met from available resources.

The County Archaeologist Laurence Keen working with Paul Gosling, English Heritage's Ancient Monuments Inspector prepares a brief for the site and launches an architectural competition for a cover building for the site. Any cover building is required to perch on the existing Roman foundations and cannot create new foundations in the surrounding scheduled monument site. The brief requires that it must also be possible to see inside the structure when the monument is closed to visitors. The brief requires that both wings be covered and that an interpretation centre is also provided.[17]

Three architectural practises submit designs.

- John Stark and Partners of Dorchester, Dorset.
- Caroe and Partners of Wells, Somerset.
- Richard Griffiths of London.[17]

Richard Griffiths proposed a series of bridge walks across the site with fabric tension structures providing awnings and canopies against adverse weather. The Interpretation Centre is perched on the bank overlooking the site.

Caroe and Partners propose a timber framed building on pads around the foundations, with a pitched metal roof, with enamelled steel and glazed walls, glass floored walkways over the mosaics and display panels supported on tensioned wire cables. Caroe and Partners strongly recommended that the south wing should not be covered by a structure therefore retaining a link with the site as excavated.[17] This matched the 1930s proposals and was adopted as sound advice.

Of the three contenders John Stark and Partners are selected to prepare the final scheme that will comprise a cover building for the West Range with steel side columns and gables, painted Pompeian Red matching the external colour found on the original Roman walls. This frame will rest on new concrete pads covered with Purbeck stone, cast on the wall tops, and will be braced with polished stainless steel

ties. It will support a roof covered with hand made Purbeck stone roof tiles of similar form to the Roman roof tiles. The sides will be filled with specially toughened glass panels.[7]

An application for funding from the European Union through the Raphael programme is successful under the Rome and her colonisation theme. The initial partners are the Castro de Chao, Asturias, Spain, and the monumental remains at Liternum, Naples, Italy. The last named project was unable to proceed and an alternative partner was found; the Roman Arena, Citta del Susa, Turin, Italy. Exchange visits are made to these projects to compare approaches and to obtain alternative insights into the interpretation of the site.[17]

Originally the design team had planned to have suspended glazed walkways over the mosaics. Whilst in Italy they also visit Herculaneum. In one house there walkways over mosaics completely destroyed the feeling of the original space. In Dorchester, one of the main aspirations is to give the visitor an idea of the form and mass of the original building, so walkways are done away with.[7]

1996-99 AC Archaeology re-excavate the site and record its condition. The walls are repaired and consolidated by the Cliveden Conservation Workshop.[17] The Roman window is remade in Oak timber with a metal ferrament based on the example discovered when the Hinton St Mary Roman Villa was excavated[18] in 1963-64.[19] Around this the wall is built up to eaves level in flint with stone quoins. All new flint walling is pointed in pink mortar and original walls in grey mortar.[12]

Work commences on the new cover structure once the walls have been stabilised. The cover building has to be heavy enough to resist “wind-blow” so load-bearing tests are carried out on a sample of the bearing points. Each bearing point has to be capable of carrying five tonnes.[7] Oil drums are placed over each test point and loaded by filling them with water.[12] Only in one case does the wall start to crack, so a reinforced concrete beam is introduced around room 8 and faced with flints pointed pink to signify its addition. Sections of the steel cover building are lifted into place using a 10 tonne crane with a 30 metre boom over a week during which traffic circulation round County Hall is stopped.[7]

Once the cover structure is in place, the Cliveden Conservation Workshop carry out trials to consolidate and clean the newly exposed mosaics. These are in surprisingly good state, the more so since the original excavators had faced up the edges with mortar. Only in room 15 is there considerable deterioration since the 1930s due to the rebuilding of the walls in 1940-58 (see above) and root and ant

damage has caused the complete disintegration of one Seasons roundel and a half of the other.[7]

The aim is to consolidate the mosaics on their existing beds not to lift and relay.[12] Innovative techniques are devised to meet these aims which are agreed with English Heritage. The tesserae are held in position with a metal grid and steam under pressure is used to remove particles trapped in the joints. Pointing is carried out by repeated introduction of dry mixes which are then wetted. Where tesserae are missing and the pattern understood spare tesserae are used to complete areas. In room 10 the outline of the octagonal shapes is picked out to give a better sense of the original design.[7]

In areas where no mosaic survives in rooms 10, 14, 13 and 16, the area proposed for pedestrian access within the final structure, lime mortar floors are laid with areas formerly covered by border mosaic set in pink mortar and the central parts in grey.[12] The mortar is cement gauged in places where heavier footfall is expected.[7] In rooms 15 and 18 localised consolidation takes place and the remaining floor is covered by Breedon Gravel. Timber barriers are erected at the entry points of rooms 15, 16 and 17. These incorporate interpretation lectern boards.[12]

A business plan for the site is drawn up in 1997 together with designs for an interpretation centre and a ramped access into the site. An application for Heritage Lottery funding for this is not accepted because the parameters for funding change to exclude interpretation centres.[17]

There are long delays in sourcing the stone roof tiles because the main supplier is contracted to provide priority to National Trust properties. [20]

The cover structure is completed and opened on 30th March 1999 by Mrs P. A. Hymers, DL, Chairman of Dorset County Council.[12]

2000 The County Archaeologist retires and a new Historic Environment team is established with responsibility, amongst other roles, to advise DCC on the Roman Town House. Senior archaeologists Steve Wallis and Claire Pinder provide the Historic Environment Manager John Lowe with archaeological advice and support.

After the failure of the funding bid for the interpretation centre the potential of making the site easier to access from the North West corner of Colliton Park is investigated. AC Archaeology carries out a field evaluation by digging a single trench on the line of a proposed new access for visitors and discovers Roman remains at a shallow

depth below the surface and above the level of the pathway in the walks. (Report No 1300/1/0 February 2000) This compromises the proposal, which is therefore abandoned.

The presence of water in the building especially during winter months gives cause for concern. Although no funding has been set aside for visitor management the building is opened to the public with planning and business support staff volunteered to man the building on a rota basis. On occasions when the building is left unattended tesserae are removed for souvenirs.[20]

2001 Simon Cleggitt an archaeologist offers help to open the building and a small grant is made available to fund his help. Continuing damage to the mosaics requires remedial action and Sophie Bartlett, a freelance conservator who worked on the mosaics whilst employed by the Cliveden Conservation Workshop, is employed to carry this out. A number of sections of tesserae are lifted and re-laid on stronger mortar beds. (Worksheet record on file.)[20]

2002 The County Council enters into an agreement with the County Museum for the Museum to manage the visitor flow on site with an agreed set of charges for entry and school support and with an understanding that some public events would be organised on the site. Chris Copson, a young teacher is engaged to provide this service and reported on the numbers of visitors and the problems of running the site in this way. Essentially the lack of a pay perimeter and the open nature of the design of the Town House made it difficult to sell tickets and obtain a return for the staff investment. The lack of additional staff to control the site also made it difficult to cope when the site was experiencing peak visitor flows. The lack of easy access to staff facilities was also very demoralising.[17]

The further deterioration of the mosaics gives further cause for concern.[20]

2003 Scheduled Monument Consent is given and additional field drainage trenches are installed to the south of rooms 8, 10 and 13 at levels below the floor level within the building to reduce the water seeping through the walls and onto the mosaics.[17] A watching brief is carried out by AC Archaeology (Doc, 3003/1/0 June 2003).This noted that the 1930's excavation had been taken down to the natural chalk, with features excavated, backfilled and the turf then reinstated. Some re-deposited chalk was found consistent with backfilling.

Carol Edwards of the Southampton City Archaeology Unit reports on the condition of the mosaics and proposes a series of measures to

improve the environment of the mosaics and work that will be required in order to maintain them in reasonable condition. Modifications are required to the cover structure to improve the environment of the mosaics. She recommends that these changes with proper maintenance should minimise the need for expensive interventive conservation treatments. They should also improve the visitor experience. She recommends that DCC consider the structure as a large museum case rather than a building to enter.[21]

World Heritage Limited, a Dorchester-based company that manages interpretive museums and exhibitions in addition to providing a consultancy service, prepares a Tourism Feasibility Study with a range of options for the future visitor management and operation of the site.

The report put forward six options and in summary concluded that;

- With investment a manned visitor attraction could be developed that would attract significantly increased visitor numbers and, through an admission charge, income. All schemes however require some deficit funding.
- An unmanned option with no charge would lead to low levels of income and would be the least preferred option.
- That remedial work should be undertaken to the Town House and the cover building,[22]

Conservation cleaning, remedial surveys and trials are carried out by Sue and Laurence Kelland in November 2003 and recorded in a report.[23]

2003-04 In 2004 John Stewart, English Heritage's mosaics expert, visits the site to examine the mosaic problems. He offers revised advice on modifications to the cover structure and suggests that the conditions of the mosaics should be scientifically monitored. He advises that the rainwater from the roof should be collected by gutters and down-pipes and channelled into a soak-away. Advice on this should be obtained from an engineer with knowledge of ground water movements. Bore-holes should be driven to record the geological structure under the site and help to design the soak-away. Water running down the glass and into the structure should be channelled out of the structure. Water penetrating the roof as wind-blown leakage should be resisted with torching. Electronic recording instruments should log the temperature and relative humidity on the mosaic surface and below it. This will help to determine whether any winter insulation protection is needed.[17]

DCC having established a partnership agreement with the Buro-Happold engineering consultancy commissions a report on the drainage issues from them. This suggests an incremental approach to the drainage of the site with increasingly expensive solutions. The report confirms that the basic proposition by John Stewart is sound but that if this does not succeed, further measures may be necessary.[24]

The County Council sets up a Roman Town House Policy Development Panel to review the special reports commissioned on the site. Officers are then asked to work up one of the proposals put forward as part of World Heritage's report. This involved a contained site that charged for access via a turnstile with management contracted out. There would not be a visitor centre due to limitations on land availability and finance.[17]

The County advertises for commercial tourism partners through the European Journal and then holds a soft marketing consultation with those that showed interest. The overwhelming advice of the private sector companies is that the chosen option does not represent value for money and does not provide a solution that is manageable either for private companies or for the Council. They advise that it will be wiser to spend capital on upgrading the site, leave it as a freely accessible site for the majority of time and hold one off events to raise profile and fund the site publicity. A further report is made to Council and the revised suggestion is agreed with the additional costs involved. The revised scheme involves remedial work and improved access to the buildings and site and developing a better scheme of interpretation for visitors. A programme of events and other on-site activities is to be developed.

2005 Consultants are appointed to the new design team established to deliver the revised project. The architect is Michael Howarth of the John Stark and Crickmay Partnership. The engineer is Paul Todd of the AKS Ward Partnership. Quantity surveyor, Peter Gunning, planning supervisor, Natasha Webley of Goyne Adams and archaeologist, Peter Cox of AC Archaeology complete the team with John Lowe, the historic environment manager representing DCC. A DCC project co-ordinator, Greg Auld, draws up a programme that splits the project into manageable phases. Designs and specifications for the initial phases are drawn up and discussions are held with English heritage preparatory to making the necessary Scheduled Monument Consent applications.

An archaeological impact assessment of the proposals for the site is requested by English Heritage and prepared by AC Archaeology.[25] Agreement is obtained for initial site testing works (the bore-holes) and

these are driven. Results from these inform the archaeological deposit model of the site prepared as part of the assessment. The report defines the horizontal and vertical boundaries of the two scheduled monuments on site (the Town House and the Dorchester Roman Walls). It provides an assessment of the likely impact of the proposed site improvement works on any archaeological deposits, and; where necessary, proposes means by which the deposit model may need to be tested by further intrusive investigations. The assessment also suggested scheme changes to minimise the likely impacts, where appropriate and advised on the phasing and delivery of the scheme as it affected the work to and around the scheduled monuments and the consent required for that work.

Emergency repairs are carried out to shattered stones in the south wing of the Town House. See report by Sue and Lawrence Kelland March 2005. Proposals for the whole site are reviewed with English Heritage's Ancient Monument Inspectors.

A suggestion made through the Dorset County Council suggestions scheme asks for seats to be provided on the way into the Town House site, The County Arts Advisor suggests the these should be made by an artist and recommends John Maine RA , He is invited to contribute to the project and provides a brilliant conceptual rearrangement of the plan that considerably enhances the sense of place. He is commissioned to provide a seating artwork.

The scheme is amended to incorporate the artistic, engineering and archaeological advice offered.

2006 Two applications for Scheduled Monument Consent for the Town House and the Dorchester Roman Walls are approved.

An architectural artist, John Mullaney, is commissioned to produce a painting showing the completed project as currently envisaged. This is enlarged onto signs explaining the proposals for the site that are erected at the two principal entry points. The DCC "dorset4you" website and articles in 'Your Dorset' explain the project and its aims.

Corbel Conservation carry out the conservation of the South range of the Town House, build up the wall tops of the West range and torch the underside of the stone tile roofs in rooms 8, 10, 13 and 14 with haired lime mortar. The well is re-pointed and additional measures put in place to deter unauthorised access into the West range. These include hens teeth fitted to the new wall ends of the south wall of room 10 and bars in the opening of the stoke hole in room 17a. The bases of the

hypocausts are cleaned and consolidated over a geo-textile membrane to inhibit plant growth. Loose stones in room 17 are repaired and consolidated. Conservation cleaning of the mosaics is carried out by Laurence and Sue Kelland and further proposals made for a long term maintenance approach. A report is prepared to support a Scheduled Monument Consent application. See proposals below.

Initial tenders for the work to revise the access and to modify the cover building prove excessive and a decision is made to split this into two projects.

One deals with the ground-works revising the access into County Hall from the rear gate, providing the disabled access path down onto the archaeological site and installing the new drainage required, It is carried out by Andrews Ltd. Trial pits dug by AC Archaeology in accordance with the recommendations of the Archaeological Impact Assessment confirm the initial understanding of the site and enable the soak-away to be placed in ground having no archaeological remains. During the excavation works the discovery of an enamelled metal sign warning of the danger of Butterfly bombs causes a hiatus until research shows why it was there. See 1940-57 above. The ground-works contract is completed by the end of 2006

The second tender blocks the open gables of the cover building, fits rainwater gutters and down-pipes and provides handrails to the steps. It is carried out by D. J. Chutter Ltd and commenced and completed in 2007.

A contractor's brief is prepared for the revised interpretation scheme and issued to commercial companies. Only two companies respond and both are interviewed. Neither company is felt to provide an adequate or economical response to the brief. The Roman Town House design team agree that the overall management of the interpretation aspects should be done in house by the historic environment manager with support from other members of the team.

AC Archaeology are commissioned to produce a preliminary description of the building, archaeology, setting and reconstruction of the Town House that could form the basis of a new interpretation of the site for authors and archaeological artists creating reconstructions. A number of visits to other sites are undertaken to view good practise.

Artist Lulu Quinn is commissioned to advise on the lighting of the Town House and, in partnership with Richard Cuthbert of Global Design Solutions of Bristol, provides a costed proposal. It is suggested that local contractors may be able to offer a more economical solution.

Towards the end of the year and into 2007 a local lighting designer, Paul Covell, is asked to work up a smaller and more targeted scheme based on the artist's suggestions.

The Heritage and Leisure Management consultancy are appointed to produce a new management plan and an HLF Your Heritage bid for the development of interpretation and heritage resources. The management plan is supported with the inclusion of the results of a consultation exercise, an audience development plan, an interpretation plan, a promotional plan, an operations plan, an events programme and a staffing and volunteer plan.

Dorset Works begin the landscaping and planting of the site.

Winter rains flood the new pathway from the rear gate revealing drainage problems in the County Hall site.

2007 A brief is written for artists and cartoonists setting out the illustrations needed for a variety of interpretive media. Quotes are sought from suitable artists and craftsmen and for all the features and work needed to deliver the interpretation and management plans.

During the work on the cover building John Maine's artwork seating is installed on the site.

Agreement is reached on a scheme to divert the over-flooding waters into storage tanks for re-use. This scheme is begun at Easter.

The unusually early arrival of warm dry weather provides problems in finishing the landscaping works.

Footnotes

1. *Information from Deed Packets in the care of Dorset County Council.*

2. *Keen, Laurence, undated article in "Archaeology Today"*

3. *Ricketts, Eric, - personal comment*

4. *Drew, Lieut-Col, C. D., and Collingwood Selby, K. C. "First Interim Report on the Excavations at Colliton Park, Dorchester, 1937-1938.", Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society.**59,** 1-14 (1937)*

5. *"An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset", Vol. II South East, Part 3, 553-558, Monument 182, Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (1970).*

6. *Corney, Mark, and Cox, Peter W., "Coliton Park Roman Town House – A Preliminary Description of the Building, Archaeology, Setting and Reconstruction", AC Archaeology Report No 7406/1/3, (February 2007)*

7. *Keen, Laurence, "Rescue News" **78,** (1999) Preservation and Presentation, The Roman Town-House, Dorchester, Dorset.*

8. *Corney, Mark, - personal comment.*

9. *Drew, Lieut-Col, C. D., and Collingwood Selby, K. C. "The Excavations at Colliton Park, Dorchester, Second Interim Report, Excavations carried out in the season of 1938.", Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society.**60,** 51-65 (1938)*

10. *Putnam, Maureen, - personal comment.*

11. *The character of all these works on site is similar with yellow cement mortars used in the core of the 'Roman' walling, matching the genuine yellow lime mortar colour of the original Roman work and rough concrete mixes with crushed brick additives. The knowledge of what had been taken from where would have been essential and therefore these works must have been undertaken immediately after the excavation and not abandoned till later.*

12. *Site observation.*

13. *Churchill, Colin, " Dorchester versus Hitler, A country town goes to War", p. 73 Dovecote Press, (2006) .*

14. *Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural and or Historic Interest – Dorchester, West Dorset 738*

15. *Correspondence files in DCC care.*

16. *Ashworth, David, -personal comment.*

17. *Project files in DCC care.*

18. *Keen, Laurence,- personal comment.*

19. *"An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset", Vol. III Central, Part 1, 117, Monument 20, Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (1970).*

20. *Lowe, John,- personal knowledge.*

21. *Edwards, Carol, "Roman Town House, Mosaics Conservation Study, Colliton Park, Dorchester", Southampton City Council Archaeology Unit Report 583 (2003)*

22. *Ridley, Michael, "Tourism Feasibility Study – Dorchester Roman Town House", World heritage Ltd (2003)*

23. *Kelland, Sue, and Kelland, Lawrence, "Dorchester Roman Town House – Conservation Cleaning and Remedial Surveys and Trials", Report (November 2003)*

24. *(Ackerman, Robert) "The Roman Town House, Drainage Investigation and Improvements", Buro-Happold, Job No 009502 (May 2005)*

25. *Cox, Peter W., "Colliton Park Town House – proposed restoration by Dorset County Council of the south range, disabled access provision and improvements to drainage and interpretation, Archaeological Impact Assessment", AC Archaeology Report No 8805/1/0, (January 2006)*

2. The Significance of the Site

Statutory Significance

Listed Grade I on 8 May 1950.

PRN 738/0/7/6 SY6890

Description: Shortly after circa 307, enlarged after circa 341. Only Roman town house visible in Britain. H-shaped west wing with hypocaust and mosaic pavements. South range added (also in C4) containing 1 heated room and 1 kitchen. Well north of south range. Excavated 1938.

Adjacent listed Buildings within Colliton Park.

- Walls on west and north sides of Colliton Park Grade II
- Colliton House Grade II*
- 8 Glyde Path Hill Grade II

Scheduled Ancient Monument DO 141. Scheduled before 1957

Adjacent Scheduled Monuments within Colliton Park.

Dorchester Roman Town Walls (part of). Monument DO 648

Lies within the **Dorchester Conservation Area**.

Rarity Significance

"Although Romano-British urban remains can be seen at other sites, notably Caerwent and St Albans, the Colliton Park town house remains **the most complete and best preserved example currently visible.**"

Corney and Cox 2007

Mosaics Significance

"These mosaics have so many features in common that they are probably contemporary and were probably laid by the same craftsmen. The finer panels display a wide range of colours and some, Mosaic 165.7 in particular, are elaborate workings of a familiar repertory of schemes and motifs. Except for Mosaics 165.39 and 165.40 (from Somerleigh Court, Dorchester), **which show these same traits, no other mosaics similar to these have been found in Dorchester.**"

Cosh and Neal 2005

Town House Mosaic numbers from Cosh and Neal ;-

Mosaic 165.1	Room 8	Mosaic 165.5	Room 15
Mosaic 165.2	Room 10	Mosaic 165.6	Room 16
Mosaic 165.3	Room 13	Mosaic 165.7	Room 17
Mosaic 165.4	Room 14	Mosaic 165.8	Room 18

Of Mosaic 165.5

"**The workmanship is exceptionally fine**. Three sizes of tesserae averaging 20mm, 15mm, and 10mm are used in the three borders, with even smaller tesserae in the portraits. The basic colours are dark grey, white, red, yellow, blue-grey, pale grey and pinkish beige; additional colours are employed in the portraits. **This represents the greatest range of colours in any single mosaic from the region**. Whilst this mosaic has the same general character as others in the building**, it is the most superior**"

Of Mosaic 165.7

"From this and the two other fragments it is possible to reconstruct the mosaic as a scheme of interlacing circles alternately of simple guilloche and stepped-triangles. ….. Although intersecting linear circles are fairly commonplace **this scheme of interlacing circles is unique in Britain**"

Cosh, Stephen R., and Neal, David S., "Roman Mosaics of Britain, Volume II, South West Britain", Illuminata Publishers for The Society of Antiquaries of London, (2005)

Significance of the Excavation

"The 1937-38 excavations …..were **a milestone in Romano-British urban studies** and it is deeply unfortunate that the outbreak of World War II prevented full publication of the results and, by default, the contemporary importance of the work."

Corney and Cox 2007

Significance for Archaeological Knowledge

"The recorded remains tell us little of the size or type of the town houses of *Durnovaria*, although the best preserved and still largely exposed building (monument 182) at Colliton Park **is an example of unusual development of residential rooms away from the sides of the courtyard or quadrangle, and has made a distinct contribution to knowledge of window design**."

An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset", Vol. II South East, Part 3, 535, Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (1970).

3. The Philosophy of the Conservation Measures

We have three broad conservation objectives;

1. To maintain the condition of the Roman Town House in the same or better condition than in 2006.
2. To seek support and partnership to assist in the ongoing management of the Town House.
3. To ensure the ongoing good management of the Town House and its grounds.

These should be supported by the following principles;

Repair not restoration.
Although no building can withstand decay, neglect and depredation entirely, neither can aesthetic judgement nor archaeological proof justify the reproduction of worn or missing parts. Only as a practical expedient on a small-scale can a case for restoration be argued. In the modern part of our building repair on a like for like basis will be the normal practise.

Experimentation.
Old buildings are not the place to test unproved materials.

Responsible methods.
A repair done today should not preclude treatment tomorrow, nor should it result in further loss of fabric.

Complement not parody.
New work should express modern needs in a modern language. These are the only terms in which new can relate to old in a way which is positive and responsive at the same time.

Regular maintenance.
This is the most practical and economic form of preservation.

Information.
To repair and care for old buildings well, they must be understood. Appreciation of a building's particular architectural qualities and a study of its construction, relationship to the climate and weather, use and social development are all enlightening. These factors also help us see why decay sets in and how it may be put right. Our aim is to

develop our scientific understanding of the building and build on previous scholarship.

Essential work.
The only work which is unquestionably necessary (whether it be repair, renewal or addition) is that essential to a building's survival.

Integrity.
As good buildings age, the bond with their sites strengthens. A beautiful, interesting or simply ancient building still belongs where it stands however corrupted that place may have become. Use and adaptation of buildings leave their marks and these, in time, we also see as aspects of the building's integrity. Repairs carried out in place, rather than on elements dismantled and moved to the work-bench, help retain these qualities of veracity and continuity.

Fit new to old.
When repairs are made, new material should always be fitted to the old and not the old adapted to accept the new. In this way more ancient fabric will survive.

Workmanship.
Why try to hide good repairs? Careful, considered workmanship does justice to fine buildings, leaving the most durable and useful record of what has been done. On the other hand, work concealed deliberately or artificially aged, even with the best intentions, is bound to mislead.

Materials.
The use of architectural features from elsewhere confuses the understanding and appreciation of a building, even making the untouched parts seem spurious. Trade in salvaged building materials encourages the destruction of old buildings, whereas demand for the same materials new helps keep them in production. The use of different but compatible materials can be an honest alternative.

Respect for age.
Bulging, bowing, sagging and leaning are signs of age which deserve respect. Good repair will not officiously iron them out, smarten them or hide the imperfections. Age can confer a beauty of its own. These are qualities to care for, not blemishes to be eradicated.

4. The Philosophy of the Interpretation Measures

The interpretation is based on the following guiding principles;-

- Innapropriate physical intrusion into the landscape should be avoided and any on site structures must be in materials, and to designs, which fit with the Scheduled Ancient Monument status of the site.

- New additions to the site should be clearly understandable as new additions.

- Messages should be conveyed, as much as possible, in a way that does not need explanation in words, Printed text on site should be reduced to the minimum possible and should be in plain English or its equivalent.

- On-site interpretation should be robust and should not require continual maintenance.

- Interpretation that stimulates curiosity and the desire to find out more is highly desireable.

- The value of the artist's or craftsman's ability to contribute to the effectiveness of visual and wordless interpretation should always be taken into consideration when creating features or meanings on site.

- Face to face interpretation is one of the most powerful, effective and memorable forms of interpretation and should become part of the long tem interpretation of the Roman Town House.

- Interpretation should be multi-sensory and physically and intellectually accessible to all.

- People tend to be most interested in, and able to relate to, stories about other people. The human stories and associations of the Roman Town House and its location should be strong themes within the interpretation.

- Opportunities for long term involvement should be developed for people of all ages and cultural backgrounds within the neighbouring community.

- A hierarchy of interpretation should be provided to enable different levels of messages to be communicated to different audiences.

- Interpretation of the Town House should be set within the wider context of Roman Dorchester and other Roman sites within the county and wider region.

- Interpretation of the Roman Town House should refer visitors to the Dorset County Museum in Dorchester where the wider story of Roman Dorchester and Dorset is interpreted and where objects found on the site during excavation can be seen.

5. Proposals for Conservation and Presentation

Mosaics

	Extent	***Action***
Proposed Action 1 - Cleaning	To all mosaics	Apply a non-cumulative biocide at least once a year. Clean the mosaics to remove deposits of dirt and salts, using soft bristle brushes in plain water.
Proposed Action 2 – Removal of Bloom	The central black, red and white patterned area in room 8 and some individual cleaning of tesserae around the border	Clean the white bloom from the surface of the tesserae in room 8, using dilute hydrochloric acid with the strict controls to avoid long term damage specified in the Kelland's Report (September 2006). This is a once only action and would not have to be repeated.
Proposed Action 3 - Grouting	This could apply to any mosaic but loose tesserae are mainly to be found in rooms 10 and 13 especially where they are still on their original beds.	Where individual loose tesserae are found during cleaning, grout them back in place with hydraulic lime (HL3.5) and sand mortar, keeping the grout well down in the cavities.
Proposed Action 4 – Roman Concrete	Areas of original mortar are found in rooms 14 and 15	Wherever minor damage is found to the original concrete, repair with hydraulic lime grout and hydraulic lime:sand mortar coloured to match.
Proposed Action 5 – Repairs to Tesserae with hyrdraulic lime and stone-dust mortar.	The areas concerned are in room 10 where in the past some of these fragile tesserae have been filled with mortar.	Where individual chalky tesserae are breaking up to grout the individual tesserae together in situ and then remove the modern grout between them and re-grout in lime and fine sand mortar kept well back from the top surfaces so as not to obscure the outlines. A limited number of the filled tesserae to be investigated and repaired each year, the number to be agreed with the senior archaeologist of Dorset County Council on a rolling programme.

The above actions will be included in an application for scheduled monument consent to be applicable as part of the regular cleaning and care operation to conserve these mosaics as and when it is necessary to carry out each action. See also the maintenance schedule below.

Scientific monitoring

The intention is to install monitoring equipment to record the temperature at the surface and 200mm below the surface of the mosaics in rooms 8, 10 and 13. The intention is also to monitor the relative humidity. The test will be for a period of 3 years during which the probes and monitors may detract slightly from the overall appearance. From checks done during the winter of 2006-7 water levels in the bore-holes will not be a problem but this can be tested again if required using the County Council's Dip-meter currently cared for by Jack Wiltshire (internal: 718 5396, external 01305 225396)

Glazing

From time to time the windows are broken and the intention is to retain the consent for repairing these as and when they are broken. Glass cleaning to be in accordance with the maintenance schedule set out below. Decal signs on the glass will carry interpretation and temporary exhibitions may also be arranged using the decal display technique. These shall never be used in any quantity that would adversely affect the appreciation of the structure and the mosaics.

Metalwork

The metal frame is the key new structural component on the site. New plates may be welded in place to carry visitor activated switches for the proposed lighting but these will be designed in the same vocabulary of shapes as the other attachments to this frame. They will be similar to the spatulate plates holding the glazing in place. Few other changes are envisaged but if further change is ever needed there will be a strong commitment to retaining the integrity of that frame as the structural skeleton of the building. For example, in attaching the brackets for the down-pipes to the frame the decision was taken that the bracket was part of the rainwater system and was to be coloured as part of that system leaving the integrity of the frame component intact. The repainting of the frame is anticipated to be required every five to seven years but the exact timing is to be determined by a quinquennial inspection. See maintenance plan below.

Roof tiles

It is unlikely that any changes will be made in respect of the roof tiles but a small collection of spares is kept for repairs and maintenance. Some of the initial tiles did fail and were replaced by Corbel Conservation. They devised a method of re-fixing roof tiles involving stainless steel wire chased in a channel from the peg hole and then hooked round the battens inside the building. Should further repairs be needed this technique should be employed. The Health and Safety file produced by Corbel Conservation has full details of this technique.

Timber purlins, rafters and battens

These components are made of oak with the intention of providing a long lifespan. It is unlikely that any further changes will be made except the fixing of lighting equipment and wiring. Wiring routes shall be agreed with the architect to provide the most sensitive appearance within the building. If we have to carry out

repairs these will be on a like for like basis. Deformation of the longest spanning purlins over rooms 17 and 18 has occurred. It has produced pronounced curvature on the ridge and caused a ridge tile failure that has now been replaced. A report on the structural safety of this has been requested from the engineer. Provided there is no ongoing problem this deformation is to be accepted as a sign of the ageing of the building. All timber framing will be inspected as part of the architect's quinquennial inspection.

Gable infill panels
The two east facing panels are painted in a pale grey to enable them to be illuminated with colour or projection during performances or events on site. The remaining panels are stained. Internally one panel will support the distribution board for the power source. In the long term they may be useful supports for storage cupboards.

Gutters and downpipes
Stout cast iron gutters have been chosen to provide a long lifespan. They will need clearing in autumn and checking in spring as part of the maintenance programme. Lead beaten into the lower joints holds these firm.

Gullies, drainage and soak-aways
All the gullies are designed for a long and sturdy life and have silt buckets which must be emptied as part of the maintenance programme. The drainage and soak-aways are designed to require little maintenance but should be inspected, as part of the quinquennial inspection, and checked after or during heavy rainfall. Keys for the drain covers are held by the Historic Environment team.

Stone and flint walling
An examination of the history of the site shows that some of the early rebuilds did not distinguish between new and old and this was not picked up when the west wing was first conserved in 1996-9. In the conservation of the south wing where the evidence was clear the distinction has been made in the recent pointing. There is no intention to revisit the repointing of the west wing to correct it for the sake of being pedantic. Indeed unless we were able to open up the structure it would not be possible to establish the exact boundaries of the earlier rebuilding. We have a structure that is unlike its original self. The original Roman builders used a yellow lime mortar to build and then rendered the exterior and plastered the interior completely covering the coursed work we now see. Therefore we accept it for what it is and fix the interpretation where it is. It is part of the integrity of the building. Walling will be inspected as part of the quinquennial inspection. See maintenance programme below.

Interpretation panels
Only two panels fall within the defined scheduled monument site. The full details of the proposals are set out in the interpretation plan. They will however have to be maintained as part of the maintenance programme. See below.

Other site features
New features proposed for the site include the timber post-hole markers, stone infant burial markers and an inscription plaque marking the site of the buried wall. These should require little maintenance but should be checked as part of the quinquennial inspection. They may need occasional cleaning. A leaflet dispenser will need to be designed and consideration is being given to providing a donations box. Further information on the interpretation aspects is given in the interpretation plan. The wash off from stainless steel onto oak may induce tannin staining so provision needs to be made for power-washing this away until the effect has stabilised. The existing front door of the Town House may need this treatment and architect's advice will be followed.

Grass and ground cover
This is regularly maintained by the ground-works team. Ivies are to be planted in the bank on the west side of the site and should be maintained. The tongue of land in the centre of the curved access ramp is to be planted with Kentucky Blue Grass to complete the landform artwork created by John Maine RA.

John Maine's stone bench
This is made from stones retrieved from a disused Portland quarry. They had been quarried in the old fashioned way with holes drilled in the rock receiving wedges that are steadily beaten until the rock splits from its bed, then worked roughly square with a mechanical kevel. They may have been quarried over 50 years ago. Their unevenness was felt to be more aesthetically pleasing than a regularly sawn stone in this context. When being laid and backfilled, John asked the workmen to think of it as like a cliff with the grass rolling up to but not covering the outcrop of rock. The intention is to encourage the growth of ivy leaved toadflax in the joints and also a perennial repeat flowering daisy to further emulate the quality of cliff landscapes.

Hedges and other planting
It is proposed to encircle the site with Yew hedging as the best long term solution to enclosing the site. This will help to stop the fly tipping still happening on the western end of the site. A concealed gate will be provided on the west side to allow machine access to the site if consent is granted. Proposals have yet to be finalised to supplement the entrance areas with some shrubs and herbaceous plants with Roman connections that would soften the landscape but this is intended.

Trees
The seven Juniperus Virginiana Skyrocket trees planted as part of John Maine's artwork relate to that specific feature of the site. Their relationship with the two Whitebeam trees will be monitored. They should outlast the Whitebeams. The

remaining trees on the site occupy the western embankment. Several are spindly and dying and should be removed. A long term strategy is required for this embankment which will act as a backdrop to the monument, a screen to the housing on the other side of the Grove and a screen to the car parking area to the west of the site.

Maintenance Programme

March to September (32 weeks)

Weekly	1. Pick up all litter, loose leaves, bird debris from the mosaics, the floors and from the graveled areas inside the cover structure. 2. Pick up all loose gravel thrown through the windows onto floors or mosaics and replace this in the external gravel areas. 3. Where seedlings or plants appear in the mosaic tesserae (tesserae are the small blocks of stone or ceramic used to create the mosaic), snip off any plant growth at the stem as close to the tesserae and mortar floor as possible. DO NOT PULL UP ANY PLANTS IN TESSERAE as the roots may pull up the tesserae or damage the mortar bedding. Plant growth in the gravel may be pulled up if the roots do not extend into any mosaic or mortar areas or structures. 4. Brush loose dust off the mortar floors and from the mosaics with soft brushes. Remove this dust from site. 5. Clean the interpretation panels on the open part of the site. 6. Maintain a logbook of all maintenance actions within which note should be made of any change in condition of the floors or any unusual occurrence. 7. Download information from the scientific monitoring equipment. 8. Cut the grass over the site as needed. Maintain landscaped areas.
Every four weeks	1. Clean the glass windows of the Town House cover structure. 2. Check the exterior structures for signs of ivy growth or shrub seedlings. Treat any discovered with brushwood killer and cut off and remove when dead. 3. Check and clean as necessary all direction signs to the site within County Hall area and in the immediate vicinity.
In April and September	1. Brush down all stone walls with soft brushes to remove cobwebs and dirt. 2. Clean the painted steelwork and clean and wipe with a clean lightly oiled cloth the stainless steel ties and fittings and handrails. 3. Clear the gutters of leaves, twigs and debris and empty the silt buckets.
Once a year	1. A complete inspection of the mosaics and floors to be carried out by a conservation specialist for signs of damage followed by biocide treatment and cleaning with soft bristle brushes and plain water. Remove excess moisture using good quality absorbent paper roll. Mosaic repairs in accordance with agreed principles. 2. Weed and cut the yew hedges in July.

October to February; 20 weeks

Every week	1. Download information from the scientific monitoring equipment.
Every four weeks	1. Pick up all litter, loose leaves, bird debris from the mosaics, the floors and from the gravelled areas inside the cover structure. 2. Pick up all loose gravel thrown through the windows onto floors or mosaics and replace this in the external gravel areas. 3. Where seedlings or plants appear in the mosaic tesserae (tesserae are the small blocks of stone or ceramic used to create the mosaic), snip off any plant growth at the stem as close to the tesserae and mortar floor as possible. DO NOT PULL UP ANY PLANTS IN TESSERAE as the roots may pull up the tesserae or damage the mortar bedding. Plant growth in the gravel may be pulled up if the roots do not extend into any mosaic or mortar areas or structures. 4. Brush loose dust off the mortar floors and from the mosaics with soft brushes. Remove this dust from site. 5. Clean the interpretation panels on the open part of the site. 6. Maintain a logbook of all maintenance actions within which note should be made of any change in condition of the floors or any unusual occurrence. 7. Cut the grass and maintain landscape features as required.
In November	1. Clear the gutters of leaves, twigs and debris and empty the silt buckets
In mid December	2. Clean the glass windows of the Town House cover structure. 3. Check the exterior structures for signs of ivy growth or shrub seedlings. Treat any discovered with brushwood killer and cut off and remove when dead.
In February	1. Replace all faded safety signs and any faded interpretation panels.

At five yearly intervals

Building	1. Architect to carry out a quinquennial inspection to determine whether there is a need to a) re-paint the steel structure, down-pipes and gutters and the painted infill timbers. b) treat the stained infill timbers. c) carry out any lime re-pointing needed. Architect to advise upon a building maintenance programme based on this inspection.
Interpretation	1. Consider whether any change is needed to the interpretation and renew as necessary.

Lighting

Proposals for the lighting are incorporated in the interpretation plan and are fully worked up in a report by Paul Covell. Maintenance for this element may require a separate schedule and contract.

6. Options for future investigation

Until the fourth and final phase of the works proposed in 2004 is completed it is difficult to envisage exactly how the events programme and the establishment of a friends group, and the management forum will affect the future of the site. However there are some clear possibilities that may be worthy of future investigation.

Floor
During the work to the building access to the interior required putting protection onto the floor to safeguard the mosaics. Temporary protection does work and it is clear that if we wished to use the structure like a huge outdoor marquee, floor protection would open up the cover structure for use during an event.

The temporary floor could even be given the design of the complete mosaic enhancing the sense of what the rooms would have felt like in Roman times.

Access
The removal of the old interpretation boards inside the structure provides the opportunity to reconsider the barrier rails and reform them with church communion rail fittings to allow easier access for maintenance and a potential public circulation if the structure is being used in marquee mode.

Insulation
The results of the scientific monitoring exercise may suggest that the mosaics should have winter insulation. Experimentation may be needed to establish the best material to use and to find out whether it can be re-used year after year.

Storage
If insulation materials are to be reused or if temporary flooring is to be reused then suitable storage facilities will have to be found. If we wish to use temporary lighting for an event then again storage may be an issue.

Exhibitions and banners
One of the suggestions made during the consultation exercise was to hold workshops making banners and then to hang these as part of a

temporary exhibition within the structure. Flying banners or any other material being exhibited as part of an event will require further consideration of how this can be done.

Lighting

Until the lighting scheme has been installed and tested it is difficult to envisage how successful this will be. However it is possible that there will be a need to extend the lighting scheme to illuminate those rooms not currently covered.

Closed Circuit Television

At the present time the CCTV coverage of the site has not enabled wrongdoers to be caught on camera. Because there will be a power supply it is possible that discreet cameras sited in the cover structure could improve the security of the site.

Artworks

There may be scope to consider the provision of further artwork on site especially if it is part of an event, will fulfil a function, or will help to interpret the site in a challenging way.