DRAFT VERSION

Eagle Parade Water Cistern

The Market Place

Buxton



A Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Monitoring

Planning application: HPK/2026/0185

NGR: SK 05757 73194

Version 1.0

July 2026

Client: Bench Architects

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Enrichment Through Archaeology

[redacted]

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2. Summary

2.1. Archaeological monitoring and recording of groundworks associated with the repair and consolidation of the structure. The proposed development area (PDA) falls within the adopted Buxton Area of Archaeological Interest as the site is in the Market Place itself at the heart of the medieval town and close to the known Roman evidence on South St. The proposed work involves excavation of foundations for new railings, which could impact buried archaeological remains.

3. Introduction

3.1. Enrichment Through Archaeology was commissioned Mr Adam Bench of Bench Architects to produce a written scheme of investigation for archaeological monitoring of the Eagle Parade Water Cistern located in the Market Place, Buxton, Derbyshire (NG reference SK 05757 73194) as part of the proposed remedial work on redevelopment (Planning application no: HPK/2026/0185). The proposal addresses the stabilisation of the structure and the reinstatement of iron railings.

3.2. The planning application has attracted the attachment of conditional permission as the site sits with the Buxton Area of Archaeological Interest (BAAI). The County Archaeologist noted its proximity to Roman material recorded on South St and that the Market Place is located squarely in the centre of Medieval town. This being the case it was stipulated that the following condition should be attached to any planning consent:

"No development shall take place until a written scheme of investigation (WSI) for archaeological work has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. For land that is included within the WSI, no development shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed WSI, which shall include the statement of significance and research objectives; and:

- The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works

- The programme for post-investigation assessment and subsequent analysis, publication & dissemination and deposition of resulting material. This part of the condition shall not be discharged until these elements have been fulfilled in accordance with the programme set out in the WSI."

3.3. This WSI has been written after the completion of a consultation visits to the site on January 5th and March 2nd 2026 and preliminary investigations undertaken on March 16th 2026 to assess the scope and scale of the proposed groundworks, their sequence and impact on the site (Parker Heath, 2026).

4. General Background

4.1. Buxton lies in the north-west of Derbyshire close to the counties of Cheshire and Staffordshire. Situated at the southern end of the Pennines at some 300m AOD, and the underlying geology is carboniferous limestone at its boundary with carboniferous sandstones and shales.

4.2. Buxton has a rich archaeological record within 2km of the site, with evidence of human activity from the Mesolithic period (e.g. Otter Hole Farm) and of settlement from the Neolithic period (e.g. Lismore Fields). There is strong evidence of Roman occupation of the area including the presence of baths in the lower part of the town.

4.3. The history of the town has been detailed elsewhere (e.g. Langham, 2001; Morris, 2007; Stroud, 2002) and there is general agreement on the history of the town prior to the 16th century and there are no extant buildings prior to this. The town has been defined as having several distinct conservation or character areas by the local authority (Morris, 2007). For the purposes of this work, only two will be considered at this point.

4.4. Character Area 1 (The Crescent) broadly features the area in the vicinity of The Crescent and the valley of the River Wye. Old Hall (MDR361), built in 1572, a property of the Earl of Shrewsbury, was used as one of the many locations around England to hold Mary Queen of Scots and behalf of Elizabeth I. Mary was held at the Old Hall on no less than eight occasions. However, it was in the 18th century that significant development of the town began. I n Lower Buxton some of the more important buildings of this time are the Grove Hotel (MDR24346), site of the first coffee house in Buxton, and of course The Crescent (MDR317), but there are other significant buildings which further attest the growth of the town such as the George Public House & Mansions (MDR24364) and the White Lion Hotel (MDR23567).

4.5. The site of the Cistern/Conduit, on the western side of the Market Place, is in Character Area 2, or Higher Buxton (Morris, 2007). Like Lower Buxton this part of the town also has a range of extant post-medieval buildings such as the early 17th century church of St Anne (MDR365) Higher Buxton too has several coaching inns e.g. The Eagle (MDR24368), The Sun (MDR24384) and Cheshire Cheese (MDR24387) and residential properties e.g. Buxton House on Terrace Rd (MDR24343).

4.6. The Eagle Parade Water Conduit or Cistern was built on behalf of the 6th Duke of Devonshire in 1840 and provided the first piped water supply in the town, drawing on cold springs. A Statement of Significance has been prepared by Bench Architects and is included in the planning application (Bench Architects, 2025). This details the history of the Cistern and repetition in this WSI would be of little advantage. It is one of several public drinking fountains in the town which includes the more well-known St Anne's Well (MDR24328) and the Samuel Turner Fountain (MDR24341). The cistern does not appear on the 1848 Buxton Tithe map (Fig. 2.) but does feature on the 1878 Ordnance Survey and subsequent maps. It also appears on 19th century paintings of the Market Place such as those of Godfrey Sykes (1849) and John Cummings Bates (1851) both of which are held in the collections of Buxton Museum & Art Gallery.

4.7. The cistern had a relatively short working life after developing problems due to corrosion and inoperability in freezing weather and by 1853 other water supplies had been constructed to serve the population of the vicinity. The site was subject to multiple episodes of disturbance for repairs and finally in 1939 the iron railings were removed as part of the war effort in the town. Today the cistern shows significant signs of deterioration and destabilisation. It has lost decorative elements such as the Cavendish serpent motif on the eastern face noted in the Statement of Significance (Bench Architects, 2025: 11) and the urn which sat atop. In 2022, Adam Bench identified the location of the urn in the Council' Market Street depot, and with HPBC's permission transferred it to the stewardship of Buxton Civic Association. The urn is now carefully stored by https://www.rmeaton.co.uk.

4.8. The current state of the fountain can be seen in Figs. 4-7 below and as a 3D scan here. The eastern face shows further delamination of the sandstone body to that recorded in the 1960's and 2016 (Bench Architects, 2025: 15). Archaeological monitoring of trial excavations in March 2026 revealed that it appeared highly likely that the cistern stands in made-up ground and the only find that materialised was a 2004 sweet packet.

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5. Archaeological Background

Prehistory

5.1.1. There are no finds or other evidence of any prehistoric activity in the immediate vicinity of the Market Place.

5.1.2. Roman

5.1.3. Despite strong evidence of Roman occupation elsewhere in Buxton (e.g. Holker Road - MDR320), the only evidence of any Roman period activity in the area is that of a paved road though to be Roman which was uncovered in 1949 (MDR345).

5.2. Post-Roman/Early medieval

5.2.1. There are no significant archaeological remains from the post-Roman period in the BAAI.

5.3. Medieval

5.3.1. In the earliest known map of Buxton, the 1631 map by William Senior, the area now occupied as the Market Place is simply labelled Buxton Towne. It covers an area in keeping with other local examples of medieval market places such as Hartington and Tideswell, but the town did not obtain a market charter until much later. What is clear from the map is the layout of the settlement on the west, north and southeast sides. Also shown are strip fields, particularly to the east. These have all since been obliterated by later development although traces can be seen elsewhere in the town, for example at Otter Hole Farm (MDR8979). Despite this, there are no significant archaeological remains from the Medieval period in the BAAI (Stroud, 2002: 8).

5.4. Post-medieval

5.4.1. The site is located in Character Area 2 of Buxton, and the post-medieval development of the Market Place has been detailed (Morris, 2007; Strong, 2002). In the 18th century the Market Place became a focal point for coaching inns, concomitant roads and residential buildings with some examples noted above. Scarsdale Place on the eastern side of the Market Place dates to the second or third quarter and has seen repeated redevelopment such as that currently taking place. In the 18th century this was the site of a large hotel, the White Hart, and glimpses of this building may still be seen to the rear of nos 10-13 Scarsdale Place (Morris, 2007). On the north side, a Dissenter chapel and manse were built in the northwestern corner in 1725. The chapel was later demolished and replaced by houses that are now form a part of Hall Bank development. A market hall was built in 1857, some years after the awarding of a market charter, but this burned down in 1885 and was replaced by the current Town Hall. The west side of the Market Place has also been extensively redeveloped. Between the Eagle Hotel and the Dissenter chapel were two and three storey buildings, used for a variety of purposes. These are illustrated in Morris (2007: PL 17 & 18). These were demolished and replaced by the development known as Eagle Parade. The Eagle Hotel in its current form, dates to 1760 and replaced an earlier inn – the Eagle and Child – and this was later extended on its southern side. There have been a range of buildings occupying the rest of the west side of the Market Place. The building now used as a Sainsbury's supermarket has in the past been a garage/petrol station and police station. It was originally a stable block for the Eagle. In 1848 the Wesleyan Methodist church was constructed in the southwest corner of the Market

Place. The immediate area around the cistern is now laid to tarmac and forms part of the Market Place car park, which was subject to improvement works in 2004.

6. Aims and Objectives

6.1. The purpose of field monitoring as stated by the CIfA is:
"is to gain information about the archaeological resource within a given area or site (including its presence or absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality), in order to make an assessment of its merit in the appropriate context, leading to one or more of the following:

a. the formulation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource

b. the formulation of a strategy to mitigate a threat to the archaeological resource

c. the formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research"

(CIfA, 2014a: 4).

6.2. The following observation has been made by the County Archaeologist regarding the site: "In relation to below-ground archaeology the site is within the Buxton Area of Archaeological Interest which principally relates to Roman Buxton but also spans the area of the medieval town. The current site may be a little peripheral to the Roman activity (though I note the record for a paved road at South St only about 90m away to the E); it would however be squarely in the medieval centre of the settlement. It is therefore a location of archaeological potential."

6.3. Of greater relevance is the location of the cistern to the Market Place and its place in the medieval and post-medieval development of the town (Knight et al 2012; Research Objective 8.1 Urbanism: morphology, functions and buildings). To date there has been a disappointing amount of archaeological investigation of this period in Buxton. It is also noteworthy that the most recent observation dates to 1995 when it was observed that only 18th century ceramics and in-situ clays were present (SDR22892). The remedial work proposes the installation of a new concrete base and the County Archaeologist stated that; "presumably this will require a certain depth of excavation – and this process may therefore have archaeological implications in exposing and/or impacting on stratigraphy beneath the Market Place with medieval…origins."

7. Methodology

7.1. Given the potential of further evidence of the development of Buxton and the proximity to known sites, the County Archaeologist has identified that a written scheme of archaeological investigation, the scope and scale of which will depend on the proposed works and sequence." The archaeological monitoring will therefore reflect both the potential of the site and of recent archaeological interventions in the area. To that end the monitoring will involve the observation, detailing and recording of any archaeological remains encountered during the removal of any topsoil and groundworks for the replacement structure. This WSI will have been agreed in advance with the County Archaeologist.

7.2. Previous discussions with HPBC Conservation Officer were also undertaken regarding any anticipated work they felt appropriate. It was agreed that a Statement of Significance and a Level 3 Building recording would be undertaken by Bench Architects and included with the Listed Building and Planning Application submissions.

7.3. The proposed works consist of the dismantling of the structure to allow stabilisation work to be undertaken. This WSI seeks to cover excavation for the footings for the reinstatement of iron railings around the cistern.

7.4. The dismantling of the cistern for workshop repairs and preparatory groundworks will be conducted by R M Eaton Stonemasons (https://www.rmeaton.co.uk) who have appropriate level of experience in heritage restoration projects of this type.

7.5. The groundworks associated with the dismantling of the structure will be always carried out under the direct observation and supervision of a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist, unless they are judged by the archaeologist to have no impact on the below ground archaeology e.g. shallow depth. This will allow the archaeologist to inspect, record and interpret any deposits exposed and judge the impact on any surviving archaeological deposits.

7.6. In the event of an archaeological 'horizon' being identified across the site, then groundworks will stop at this level to allow the archaeologist sufficient time to record the archaeology before continuing. Any significant archaeological deposits, features or finds encountered will be highlighted to all contractors employed on the site. Spoil produced from the works will be checked and any finds will be retained. Spoil from this project will be disposed of by the contractor for the works.

7.7. All sub-surface stratigraphy down to the natural will be cleaned using hand tools unless safety reasons dictate otherwise. All sub-surface stratigraphy will be recorded and interpreted by the archaeologist.

7.8. The extent and site of the groundworks of the trench will be set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using a Total Station. Each context will be recorded on a proforma context sheet and will be recorded in 3 dimensions using a Total Station.

7.9. Plans and sections will be drawn on drafting film using pencil at scales of 1:10 and 1:20 as appropriate to record all contexts and features in plan and in section. All pencil drawings will be inked post-fieldwork and scanned so that digital versions are available.

7.10. Digital photographs using a digital SLR camera (min 24 megapixel) will be taken of each context with site code, trench number, context number, photographic scales and North arrow included and stored in TIFF format.

7.11. Written registers of all plans, drawings, photographs, and finds will be maintained.

7.12. All small finds encountered will be retrieved according to standards (CIfA, 2014b). They will be recorded on proforma finds recording sheets and in 3 dimensions using a Total Station and bagged and labelled according to context and finds number and stored in accordance with these standards. A finds register will list all finds recovered.

7.13. A recovery and selection strategy will be agreed upon and written at the start of the project once the supervising archaeologist has been appointed with advice from Martha Jasko-Lawrence of BMAG and finds specialists. This policy will be kept under review and, if necessary, amended.

8. Timetable

8.1. The project will take place at a date to be confirmed. The monitoring process is subject to change as it is dependent upon the progress made in the demolition of the existing garage and preparation of groundworks. It is estimated that groundworks will take 1-2 days dependent upon local geology etc. The monitoring is estimated therefore to take a minimum of 1 day with allowance being made for appropriate fieldwork upon the discovery of significant features.

8.2. Post-monitoring finds analysis and report writing will take place following the excavation and will be completed by 4-6 weeks after fieldwork.

9. Staffing

9.1. The author – Dr Ian Parker Heath - is a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist. His fieldwork experience includes excavating on the Roman fort in Chesterfield, being a supervisor on the Stonehenge Riverside Project and site director on 'The Search for Radbourne Old Hall', 'Peeling back the Layers' and 'Digging Deeper' local community heritage projects. He will be employed to oversee the whole project. He will direct the excavations and undertake finds processing on site, enable specialists to have access to artefacts, ensure the archive is properly prepared and write and compile the final report.

10. Reporting & Archive deposition

10.1. Upon completion of the fieldwork and desk-based research, a report will be prepared to include the following:

- A non-technical summary of the project.
- An introduction, which will include the grid references and dates when the work took place.
- Location map.
- An outline of the excavation methodology
- A description of the project site – setting, geology and topography
- The results of all aspects of the investigation, including specialist reports and archaeobotanical analysis, and including any relevant plans, elevation and section drawings and a selection of photographs.
- Analysis and observations.
- Discussion and Interpretation.

10.2. Copies of reports will made available to the Buxton Civic Association, County Archaeologist and the Derbyshire HER in PDF format.

10.3. The project archive is subject to the current collection guidelines, both national and local. Buxton Museum & Art Gallery is the receiving museum for this area and are the primary organisation for the reception of the archive, including finds in agreement with them. The accession number for the project will be made available as soon as it is received. In terms of archive production and storage there are 3 possible outcomes and these are highlighted in the BMAG policy document (BMAG, 2012).

- If significant finds are recovered and the museum agrees to retain the archive it will be deposited in accordance with this policy and a separate but linked archive will be created via the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) including the digital photographic record.
- If there are no retained/significant finds but there is significant stratigraphy recorded then an ADS archive will be created (including digital photographs).
- Finally, in the event of no archaeologically significant finds or features being found then no archive will be deposited with BMAG. In this case the report will be submitted to the Buxton Civic Association, Derbyshire HER and the OASIS record completed including an upload of the project report and any additional digital images. The standard mid-project agreement will be completed and sent to the museum along with a copy of the OASIS record.

11. Dissemination

11.1. A selection of the archive will be digitised and archived with the ADS. At the start of the project, an OASIS (id: enrichme3-510289) online record will be initiated and completed at the end.

12. Health & Safety

12.1. Health and safety issues will take priority over archaeological matters and all staff will comply with relevant Health and Safety Legislation.

12.2. A Risk Assessment will be prepared prior to the start of the project. The particular risks involved with this project will be assessed, recorded and relevant mitigation measure put in place and will be read and signed by all participants in fieldwork.

13. Monitoring of fieldwork

13.1. The County Archaeologist will be given the opportunity to visit the project during fieldwork. To this end they will be given one weeks' notice of the commencement of work on the site. Notice will also be given of the completion of the work and a summary of the findings provided.

14. Copyright

14.1. BMAG will retain copyright of this WSI and any reports produced resulting from this monitoring.

15. Sources/Archives

Bench Architects (2025) Statement of Heritage Significance Eagle Parade Cistern/Conduit, Market Place, Buxton. Unpublished Report.

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Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. (2014b). *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*,

East Midlands Historic Environment Research Framework (https://researchframeworks.org/emherf/research-strategy/roman-matrix/#5G)

Knight, D., Vyner, B. & Allen, C. (2012*). East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands*. Nottingham: University of Nottingham.

Morris, M. (2007). *Buxton Conservation Areas Character Appraisal*. https://www.highpeak.gov.uk/media/220/Buxton-area-character-appraisal-adopted-April-2007/pdf/HP_CAA.pdf

Parker Heath, I (2026) Eagle Parade Water Cistern, The Market Place, Buxton. A report on the Archaeological Monitoring.

Stroud, G. (2002). *Derbyshire Extensive Urban Survey Archaeological Assessment Report*. https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/derbyshire_eus_2009/

16. Maps

Fig. 1. Location of site in Buxton

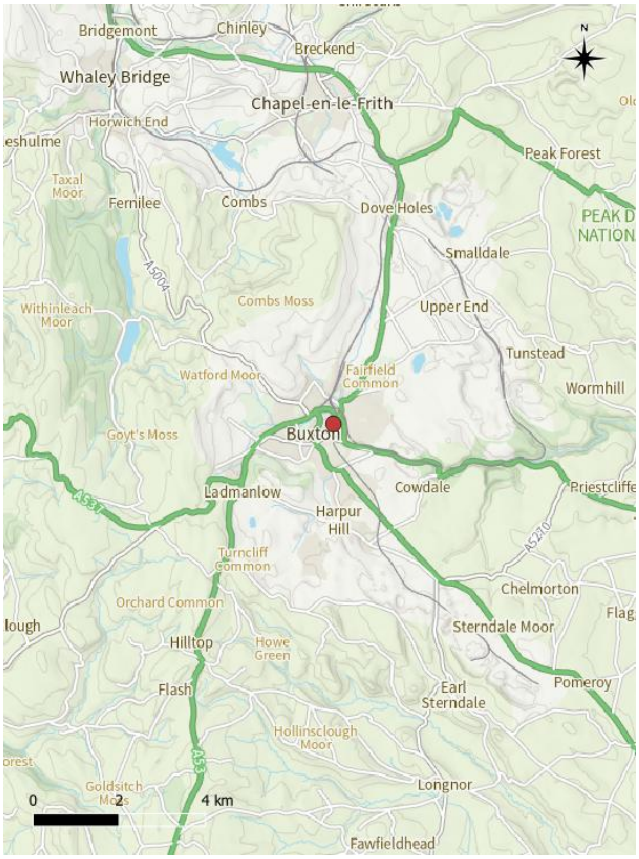

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Fig. 2. Detail of Market Place, Buxton, 1848 Tithe map.



Fig. 3. Detail of Market Place, Buxton, 1878 Ordnance Survey map.



Fig. 4. East face of Eagle Parade cistern.



Fig. 6. West face of cistern. Note structural damage to lower part.



Fig. 7. North face of cistern illustrating delamination and damage due to subsidence.

