

## Epilogue

*Our blueprint [for the site of Sheffield Castle] seeks to combine the history and heritage of the site with the contemporary regeneration of Sheffield in the 21st century ... Some of the most exciting cities in the world are those that adapt, change and grow. This is the opportunity for Sheffield now* (Friends of Sheffield Castle 2019, 3)

In this book we have presented a biography of Sheffield Castle, built around the intertwined histories of the building, the landscape in which it was located, the changing needs, interests and involvement of the local community, and the priorities of successive generations of archaeologists. We tend to think of castles as places where the great lords and ladies of the Middle Ages lived, but the heroes of our book have scarcely been the Earls of Shrewsbury or Dukes of Norfolk but rather a tax collector, a cutler and a local authority surveyor. We have seen the castle through their eyes, and analysed their struggles to understand what they encountered, their priorities in interpretation and public dissemination, their achievements and disappointments and the obstacles that were placed in their way. We have also situated our analysis of the archaeological archives and of the modern excavations in the context of a long-running regeneration debate, and we have used them to contribute to this both by dealing with a major impediment to the City Council securing much-needed funding, and also to inform and inspire future developments. In this final section of the book we reflect on what we have achieved, and on the lessons to be learned from our efforts to use the archaeology of Sheffield Castle to add an important new dimension to the history of Steel City, and to put that archaeology to work in the service of the city's future.

### Working with early archives

Had we simply wished to write a book about the form and chronological development of Sheffield Castle, the Armstrong, Himsworth and Butcher archives would certainly have enhanced our understanding of broad phases of development, the topography of the moat, and the state of preservation across the site. This is all valuable information but is actually among the least interesting of the many uses to which these archaeological archives can be put. Certainly, in the context of aspirations to redevelop the site and to attract investment in this deprived district of the city centre, it is critical to scrutinise the records of earlier excavations to understand something of the logistical challenges that a construction company will encounter during groundworks on the site, to encourage their investment through presenting what can reasonably be known of the archaeological record, rather than what is feared by funding bodies distracted by worst-case scenarios. Such study also helps to inform plans for

---

#### How to cite this book chapter:

Moreland, J. and Hadley, D. (with A. Tuck and M. Rajic). 2020. *Sheffield Castle: archaeology, archives, regeneration, 1927–2018*, pp. 333–340. York: White Rose University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22599/SheffieldCastle.j>  
CC BY-NC 4.0, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0>

preservation and recording of the archaeological remains during future development, albeit, as we pointed out in the Preface, that modern requirements for developer-funded initiatives exclude analysis of legacy archives from the requirements placed on developers. Here we have been able to facilitate interpretation of the findings from recent excavations by incorporating them into a volume that has also seen the legacy archives written up. Together they provide an enhanced understanding of the history of the heart of the city from the Middle Ages right through to the demolition of the Markets in 2015, a knowledge that provides a significant resource for developers seeking both to respect the character of the place and to benefit from the fact that heritage ‘pays’.

Throughout the book we have focussed on how we can use early legacy archives to understand the archaeological process and the development of historical knowledge over the course of a century. By engaging in what might be called source criticism of the archives, we have shown how we can understand them as repositories of information about the archaeological record but also of the circumstances in which archaeological investigation and interpretation were conducted over a period of almost a hundred years. As such, we have been able to offer invaluable insights into the development of the discipline, and its practice at a local level – in a world far removed from Leonard Woolley’s excavations at Ur or the search for Homeric and biblical cities in the east Mediterranean (see Chapter 2; Carver 1987, 101–3). The recent archival turn in the humanities has moved from an approach that uses ‘archives as a primary source to studying them as a topic in themselves, considers how the archive is constructed, and its implications in knowledge formation’ (Baird and McFadyen 2014, 14). There has been a constant theme throughout the book of archaeology being conducted against a backdrop of building construction, with varying levels of local government intervention, and in response to contemporary public interest and expectations, and we have seen the impact that this had on the creation of the archaeological archive. For example, in Chapters 2 and 3 we saw the ways in which the archive of Armstrong and Himsworth was shaped by a growing sense of Sheffield’s history, and how this sometimes led to archival information being modified. In the case of the former, he was presenting schematic results in his drawings as a means of delivering what was, for those times, a modern archaeological pastiche of what had been found. Himsworth, in contrast, can be shown to have gone back to his records and amended them in the light of new findings. It would be unfair to claim that he falsified what he had seen; rather, what emerges is an attempt to make sense of what was being recorded as new findings emerged. It is too easy to dismiss archives from nearly a hundred years ago as unreliable; while there are inevitable shortcomings in terms of how findings were recorded, in all other respects it is difficult to deny that Armstrong and Himsworth between them kept as good a record as they could in the circumstances in which they were working. What is also striking about the way they worked is that they sought at every step to *interpret* what they had seen, typically in the framework of the historical accounts concerning some of the earliest lords of the manor, Earl Waltheof, William de Lovetot and Thomas de Furnival II. And, while we have been critical of their tendency to rely on texts in this way, we also acknowledge that much of the history they wrote from the archaeology they saw has stood the test of time, and has been confirmed by modern excavations with their scientific dates and more refined understandings of artefact chronologies. It is also important to recognise, as we discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, that while they were recording the archaeology the two men were actively engaged in research about the site, and worked closely with local finds specialists and historians. Such examples of research-based interpretation during the process of excavation have seemingly been overlooked in the context of 21st-century arguments about the need to inculcate a research culture in modern developer-funded excavations where the ‘emphasis on excavation as record has resulted in the central role of historical enquiry being denied in much of the legislative and policy frameworks established by the curatorial sector of British archaeology’ (Andrews *et al.* 2000, 527). The desire to embed research in all practice is laudable, but it is one of the considerable strengths of the 1920s ‘castle project’ that it was already doing so – and we suspect that this is as often true as not in the longer-term history of urban excavation.

Leslie Butcher was closely embedded in the local archaeological scene when he was tasked by the City Architect with recording the remains of the castle during construction work from the late 1950s. While he did not have the profile of Leslie Armstrong, he was unquestionably ‘the right man for the job’. Butcher’s motivation seems to have lain in his long-standing commitment to recording the archaeological record of Sheffield and its region, and his capacity to both capture and present archaeological information through the drawn record was exceptional. In contrast to Armstrong and Himsworth, who largely interpreted the archaeological record through the written record, Butcher contextualised what he saw through consideration of the natural topography of the site, its physical modifications and the townscape. While we have little evidence for Butcher’s knowledge of wider archaeological discourse, it is striking that the draft papers he wrote in the early 1970s, focussing on long-term processes and geology, with little attention to historical actors, mirror the trends more broadly in archaeology at that time following the processualist turn of the 1960s. Butcher’s emphasis was on environmental factors and long-term change, with

apparently limited interest in human agency or social and cultural factors. The premature death of Leslie Butcher deprived the city of the publication of what he had recorded, which was clearly close to being ready to submit.

The examination of archaeological personalities, their collaborators and the experiences they had during their research can be of considerable value for understanding the development of the discipline. As Richard Bradley (1997) has noted of a habit of his when reading archaeology publications:

I have become an aficionado of the Acknowledgements, for these often explain much of the main text ... It tells us which field archaeologists worked together at different times, and sometimes it indicates the tasks that they performed.

In this book we have situated earlier archaeological investigations in the context of the local collaborations, personalities and available resources to reveal how archaeological knowledge was created and disseminated. We have also identified the impediments placed in the way of earlier generations of archaeologists and the considerable efforts they made to overcome them. In doing so we have shown how important insights can be recovered from early legacy archives, both about the past and about how knowledge of that past was created. We have also documented how important 'amateur' archaeologists have been in the creation of local knowledge, both feeding off and fuelling local beliefs about heritage and identity. But we seriously underestimate their efforts and devalue their contribution if we see their framework of enquiry as 'merely' local. Armstrong, Himsworth and Butcher may have been interested in the history of their place, but the ways in which they explored and understood it was informed by broader (national and international) perspectives and practices. Wessex Archaeology is a national organisation, but they, more than anyone, have engaged the people of Sheffield in the recovery of Castlegate's history.

### Urban regeneration and community action

In Chapter 9 we discussed the slow progress that has been made towards improvement of the social and economic conditions of some of Sheffield's most deprived regions using heritage as an element in the regeneration process. Considerable achievements over the last decade in using the local heritage to improve conditions on the housing estates built within the former deer park have yet to be matched in efforts to regenerate Castlegate. The former was achieved by a combination of efforts involving a community-based charity, a social enterprise and local volunteers, assisted by local government and European and charitable funds, which, among other things, facilitated the building of a visitor centre at the hunting lodge ruins. In the case of Castlegate, however, the regeneration initiatives are made more complex by the variegated pattern of land use and property ownership, by the fact that its buildings are at different stages in their lifecycle – some newly built, some recently demolished – and by the need to excavate on Castle Hill in advance of future construction. Further, as we saw in the Preface, the unpublished archaeological archives have been a significant impediment to the council's capacity to acquire funding and attract investors. In the view of such funding bodies they constituted a serious 'known unknown'. Through this volume, and the research that underpins it, they have become 'known', a significant resource both for understanding the past and informing the construction of its future.

Heritage-led urban regeneration is a global phenomenon, albeit approached very differently across the world, according to levels of state intervention, availability and sources of funding, and attitudes to heritage assets (Pendlebury and Porfyriou 2017). In the UK, in the current economic climate, community-based initiatives, in which local government works with third sector and voluntary organisations, have become commonplace as the means to achieve regeneration. In a 2017 joint report by the Local Government Association, the Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association and Arts Council England (2017) it was argued that community engagement should lie at the heart of successful 'placemaking', and that this requires strong partnership working. This was a response to the 2016 Culture White Paper, setting out the government's vision and strategy for the cultural sectors, including heritage, which placed councils at the forefront of leading local action. For their part, local councils have frequently turned to community engagement to improve services, infrastructure and opportunities, and the 2017 report on placemaking identified successful case studies which were embedded in local heritage, culture and traditions, noting that '[e]ffective placemaking cannot be done by councils alone, and strong partnership working is a feature of all the case studies featured here'. While one can see the positives in this, as communities are empowered to have a say about developments in their local environment, it is nevertheless apparent that these developments have been driven by serious cuts in the central funding available

to local authorities. The University of Sheffield's 'Engaged University' initiative was developed in response to the deficit thus created, and the ongoing Castlegate collaboration between the Departments of Archaeology, Architecture and Landscape Architecture has been cited as an instance of the 'power of academics to influence urban development and discourse which is not subjugated to commercial and capital interests' (Shtebunaev 2018, 41). In this context too, community groups no longer see their role simply as sounding boards for plans led by local authorities or universities. The Friends of Sheffield Castle (2019, 3 11), following wide-ranging consultation, have produced their blueprint for the future development of the castle site. This foregrounds its long history in a set of options to meet the needs of 'current and future Sheffield' and create an 'inspirational and dynamic district' of the city centre. Local businesses are also playing their part in investing in the Castlegate area and creating an exciting vibe. The creative industries sector is now populating the district and there have been frequent meanwhile uses of the site, including the pop-up festivals and cultural events; this is exactly what was envisaged, and encouraged, by the Revealing the Castle project that we discussed in Chapter 9. These have been important steps forward, underpinned by our academic research into the history and archaeology of the site, but the future remains precarious and the risks to the new momentum of lack of funds remain real.

### Future directions

A new dimension to the regeneration debate, and a new way of presenting the history of the site, emerged in 2018 through the creation of a Virtual Reality (VR) model of the castle. This was courtesy of funding awarded to Dawn Hadley, Steve Maddock and Carolyn Butterworth by the Arts & Humanities Research Council and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, as part of a joint initiative to foster research into immersive experiences (Figure v). Informed by the archaeological research for this book, a VR model of the castle was created by local creative agency Human, which used specialist computer packages, including Maxon Cinema 4D and Unity game engine software. While this shows among other things just how far visualisations of the castle have come since the sketches of Leslie Armstrong and Joseph Himsworth, it is not so far removed from their intentions of bringing the castle to public attention using the latest techniques available to archaeologists, or from the aims of Leslie Butcher with his 'bird's eye view' of the castle and his isometric drawings. It is hard to say if this model takes us closer to the reality of the appearance of Sheffield Castle in the late 15th century,







**Figure vi:** *Augmented Reality experience.* The virtual reality model was used by Dr Steve Maddock and Matt Leach of the Department of Computer Science at the University of Sheffield to create an Augmented Reality experience for smartphones to be used on site. The team developing the app on site (top) and the castle returned virtually to its place in Castlegate amid the modern cityscape (bottom). University of Sheffield.

**Figure v (page 336):** *Virtual Reality model of the castle.* Created by Sheffield creative agency Human, using Maxon Cinema 4D (3D software), Unity (realtime 3D/AR/game engine software), Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator. Created by Human, copyright University of Sheffield. This is a still from a video, which can be seen here – <https://doi.org/10.15131/shef.data.12302429>.



**Figure vii:** *Putting the castle back in Castlegate.* The virtual castle projected onto the side of the Yorkshire Artspace building on Exchange Street during the Festival of the Mind, September 2018. For the first time in over 350 years the castle towered over the town; for one night only! Photograph Steve Pool, copyright University of Sheffield. This is a still from a video of the event. The video can be seen at <https://doi.org/10.15131/shef.data.12311684>. A video of a flythrough of the virtual castle can be seen at <https://doi.org/10.15131/shef.data.12341186>.

but there is no question that the format we chose for presenting a model of the castle captured the imagination and translated the archaeological evidence into a medium that is up to the moment and culturally relevant. Our work gave Sheffield Castle a new visual identity in the context of the regeneration debate (Burn 2018).

We also transformed the VR model into an Augmented Reality (AR) application. This was initially produced for smartphones, so that it could be used on site in Castlegate, allowing the user to see the castle at real size in its exact location amid the modern buildings, and it produced some arresting images (Figures vi and vii). However, rolling this out for wider public use was a challenge, with respect to the technological limitations of using AR on mobile devices in an outdoor setting (Leach *et al.* 2018). Therefore, we repurposed the model into an app for iPad, and launched it at the University of Sheffield's Festival of the Mind in September 2018 in an installation in the city centre's Millennium Galleries (University of Sheffield 2018). The app was used in conjunction with a 1:150 scale wooden model of Castlegate as it is now (constructed by the School of Architecture at the University of Sheffield), and was presented alongside images of some possible futures for Castlegate to emerge from the Revealing the Castle project (University of Sheffield 2016). Under the strapline of 'Experience Castlegate' we asked visitors 'What if you could see the past, present and future of our city all at the same time?', encouraging debate and discussion about what the future might entail, and what place the remains of the castle might play in that. Over eight days, there were over 7,000 visitors, with the installation garnering a great deal of media attention including an appearance on the BBC regional news programme *Look North* (Figure viii; 'Sheffield Castlegate', 2018).

At the time of completing this book the AR app and wooden model have been installed in the National Videogame Museum (NVM) in the city centre, where it is being seen and explored by hundreds of schoolchildren and their families. It is apposite that this is how the castle is now being consumed, because the NVM is based in a rejuvenated Castle House, the city-centre store of the Brightside and Carbrook Co-op from 1958. This building is now also home to Kollider, an incubator for digital and tech companies and start-ups, and to a range of restaurants, bars and social spaces. The castle has found a temporary virtual home in a building which is the successor to the one on the corner of Exchange Street and Waingate, whose construction in 1927 led to the

**Figure ix (page 339):** *The gatehouse of Sheffield Castle in a Virtual Reality model.* The 21st-century visual identity for this historic site. University of Sheffield.





**Figure viii:** *The past, the present, and the future of Castlegate.* The castle went on display in Sheffield's Millennium Gallery in September 2018 as part of the University of Sheffield's Festival of the Mind. The castle was able to be viewed in Augmented Reality on tablets in the context of a wooden scale model of Castlegate as it appears today. The installation attracted c.7,000 visitors over eight days. University of Sheffield.



involvement of Leslie Armstrong and Joseph Himsworth, and the subsequent first serious debate about how to preserve and present the heritage of the site. The use of VR and AR allows us to create and display multiple instances from the histories of Castlegate, but the actual remains of the castle (and/or the bowling green, the cementation furnace etc.) must also have a role to play in the presentation of the heritage of this persistent place, allowing, as they do, people to encounter and engage with the materiality of the past, and with the buildings and objects experienced by those who lived then (Figure ix).

The Castlegate district is seeing an influx of new businesses and the landscape around the site of Sheffield Castle is beginning to thrive once again. Community action groups, the Friends of Sheffield Castle and the Friends of the Old Town Hall, which is nearby, are working hard, and in collaboration with the University and the Council, to preserve and promote the heritage and especially the material remains of this place.<sup>32</sup> But the heart of Castlegate, the former heart of the city, remains empty. We very much hope that the knowledge of the past, and the lessons to be learned from it, contained in this book will help to fill that space with an iconic development that contributes to the future vitality and identity of the city, as the castle itself once did.

### Bibliography

The full bibliography is available at the end of this volume, or at: <https://doi.org/10.22599/SheffieldCastle.k>.

---

<sup>32</sup> The University of Sheffield has worked with Sheffield City Council, The Friends of Sheffield Castle, and Wessex Archaeology to produce a video which captures the essence of that collaboration and our vision for the future – ‘*Castlegate, Sheffield – Excavating the Past; Building the Future*’ can be seen here – <https://doi.org/10.15131/shef.data.12361838>.