

Lancaster Civic Vision

Celebrating our Heritage – Enhancing our Environment – Shaping our Future

LANCASTER'S URBAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATABASE

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The history of Lancaster, like that of every city, is a long and complex story that can be revealed using information in many different sources and formats – archaeological evidence, historic documents, newspapers, oral testimonies, paintings and photographs, for example. These sources tend to be kept in separate places, by different agencies and in different formats. Many are tricky to access. Therefore telling Lancaster's story is complex.

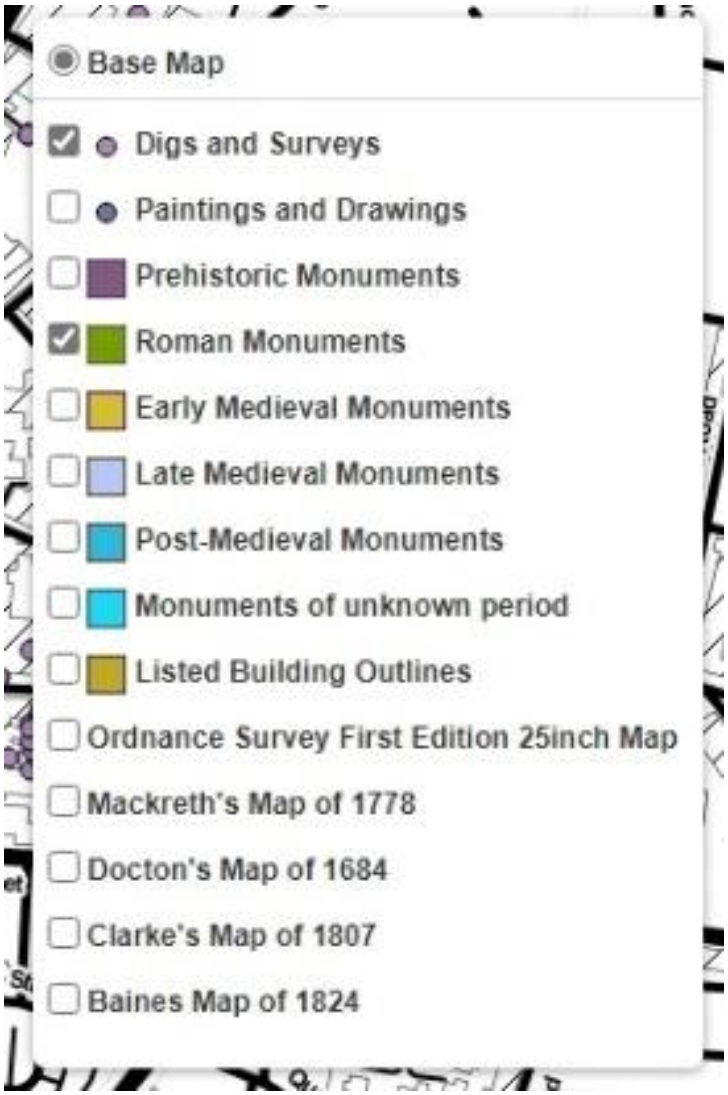
One way of making history easier to grasp is to bring these various types of evidence together in an integrated database. This has been done in Lancaster, and several other towns, using funds from English Heritage (now Historic England) and with support from Lancaster City Council. Unlike many towns, the Lancaster Urban Archaeological Database is publically available on the website of Oxford Archaeology North, which compiled it.



The website is http://lancasteruad.oxfordarchaeology.com Do explore it.

Around 550 items of evidence were collected for central Lancaster and geo-referenced on to a base map. The base map itself can be overlaid with historic street maps of Lancaster in the 17th, 18th or 19th centuries or with a modern map by OpenStreetMap.

You can study all the items together – but it is a crowded map even when enlarged – or you can select for display only particular historical periods or specific types of evidence for parts of central Lancaster. Each item on the map is represented by a coloured dot.



When you click on a dot, a pop-up box appears that, when you click on "More info", gives you additional information about it. This can be slow to react – the fist-shaped cursor changes to an upward-pointing-arrow cursor. Here is the pop-up information on the Music Room on Sun Street.

The Music Room, Sun Street, Lancaster

This Grade II Listed, currently semi-derelict, building, was originally constructed at some time c1730 but was restored extensively during the 1970s, and whose ground floor is currently used for commercial purposes (562). Known as the Music Room, the three storey structure with three bays is of sandstone

ashlar with coursed rubble to its sides and rear, and has a slate roof behind a parapet. The central bay is wider than the others, and the two lowermost storeys have fluted pilasters, Ionic on the ground floor, Corinthian on the first floor, while the 2nd storey has panelled pilasters and a cornice below a balustrade. The central first floor glazing bar sash has a moulded surround with a swan-necked pediment supported on brackets and with a central urn, on either side are similar sashes in plain surrounds. Above are three 9-pane smaller sashes, and the central one has a moulded surround. On the ground floor the outer bays have doorways with architraves. Above each is a round-headed window with moulded imposts. The wider central round-arched opening is now glazed and has moulded imposts, a mask keystone and scrollwork spandrel decoration. The building may have been erected by Oliver Marton Sr. in the then garden of 76 Church Street, between his purchase of the property in 1723 and his death in 1744 (140, 562).

There is a useful "Help using the map" page.

More information about the database can be found in this article:
Clark, G. and Newman, R. Lancaster's Urban Archaeological Database: A Note.
Contrebis 2020, volume 38, p29.

The online version of this article is available at: https://lahs.archaeologyuk.org/contrebis38.htm

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