

Leicester City Council Historic Environment Record Monument Full Report

24/05/2024

Jewry Wall Bathhouse Complex - Historic Environment Record Entry

HER Number	Site Name	Record Type
MLC67	Roman bath complex	Monument

This is the Roman bath complex excavated in 1936-39 by Kathleen Kenyon. There were furnaces at the west end, next to which it is thought there was a large hot bath. It is thought that the warm baths just lay to the east, were smaller than the hot baths. The cold plunge, toilet and changing rooms lay further east, beyond which was an exercise hall.

Monument Types and Dates

COLONNADE (built c. 145, Early Roman to Late Roman - 140 AD? to 400 AD?)

DRAIN (built c. 145, Early Roman to Late Roman - 140 AD? to 400 AD)

BATHS (Built c. 145, (between) Early Roman to Late Roman - 145 AD? to 409 AD?)

Evidence SUB SURFACE DEPOSIT

WATER TANK? (Early Roman to Late Roman - 200 AD? to 400 AD?)

Description and Sources

Description

A small-scale excavation between the Jewry Wall and St Nicholas Church in the early 1860s by Joseph Goddard revealed evidence of piers '7 feet 6 inches' beneath the pavement, interpreted as supports barrel vaulting, a 'concrete' floor. The piers may represent the column bases identified in Kenyon's excavations of the 1930s. <1>

The site of the Roman baths built in the C2nd. It lies immediately to the west of the Jewry Wall. At either end of the surviving wall can be seen the foundations of two suites of three rooms, interpreted as men's and women's changing rooms, but also possibly each including a plunge pool, washroom and/or lavatory, etc. Between the two suites, beneath which ran one of the main drains, there may have been a large cold plunge (frigidarium). Further to the west were three smaller rooms, at least one of which had underfloor heating. They were probably the warm-rooms (tepidaria). Beyond them, and even further to the west were the three main hot-room (caldaria), heated from a series of furnaces now located below where the Jewry Wall Museum now stands. Excavation revealed small apses at either end of the range of hot rooms, probably each containing a wash basin (labrum) or cold plunge pool, and larger apses and a small rectangular chamber along the W edge. The latter are likely to have housed heated baths, and perhaps a sauna-type facility.

To the N of the bath complex ran one of the streets of the Roman town, separated from the bath house by a portico perhaps including a range of shops or other facilities. A more complex and less easily interpreted sequence was identified to the S, with a tessellated surface and rooms perhaps representing administrative buildings or an adjacent property. In the SW corner, a latter addition to the site (c.180-200), was located a masonry structure with a series of parallel walls, one of which appears to be reused from an earlier building phase. Excavation suggested a like structure to the W separated by a central (?) drain; this has been interpreted as a reservoir/water tank.<2>

Traces of C1st-C2nd of a road to the north of the baths were found predating the construction of the Baths (c.130). The road was sealed by apparently waterlain deposits indicative of a period of disuse, although no dating evidence was recovered for this phase. The line of the northern wall of the baths was robbed out in the C13th. <6>

Kathleen Kenyon (later a Dame) believed that it had originally been a forum and basilica, but our present knowledge of the other public buildings makes it certain that the complex was always intended as a bath suite. The Jewry Wall would then have been the western wall of a palaestra (exercise hall). It became the narthex of an early Saxon church.<7>

The Jewry Wall has been a 'free-standing' structure for a considerable period of time and there is no direct archaeological or documentary evidence that this formed the western wall or narthex of an early Saxon church. An alternative interpretation for its survival is that the western buildings of the former bathhouse complex were used as a church during the Anglo-Saxon period prior to Danish control. The Jewry Wall would thus have formed the eastern wall of the church. The palaestra may have been a colonnaded open courtyard to the east. During Danish control the church (bathhouse) fell into disuse or possibly partially destroyed (desecrated). With the re-establishment of Anglian control a new church was established in the area of the palaestra, occupying a largely open space, recycling and using Roman material, with knowledge that the Jewry Wall was once part of a church, its religious and sacred significance understood. This sequence of events, albeit speculative, would explain why the Jewry Wall was not attached directly to or part of St Nicholas' Church, but was in effect, preserved, with a walkway between the two (now St Nicholas' Walk).

A recent assessment of the archaeological evidence of the Raw Dykes and of earthwork and LiDAR evidence of sites west of the city boundary lead the researchers to conclude that as well as an aqueduct the earthwork was also canal constructed by the Romans to import building material into the city from quarries southwest of Leicester. The study also sought to reconcile the levels provided by Kenyon during her excavations with those of the modern ground levels and surviving architectural elements of the Jewry Wall itself.<13>

Speed, G, 2024, *A Thermae and Aqueduct in Roman Leicester: Recent Discoveries at Jewry Wall and The Raw Dykes.* In

- Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, Vol 97, p.41-74* (Article in serial). SLC1142.
- <1> **Goddard, J.**, 1864, *The Jewry Wall. In Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, p.202* (Bibliographic reference). SLC1106.
- <2> **Kenyon, K.**, 1948, *Excavations at the Jewry Wall Site, Leicester* (Monograph). SLC219.
- <3> **Liddle, P.**, 1983, *A Guide to 20 Archaeological Sites in Leicestershire, p.28-29* (Unpublished document). SLC141.
- <4> **English Heritage**, 1996, *Jewry Wall: remains of a Roman bath house, palaestra and Anglo-Saxon church, 17154* (Scheduling record). SLC218.
- <5> **Harvey, D.**, 1996, *Vaughan College* (Unpublished Report). SLC284.
- <6> **Gnanaratnam, A.**, 1999, *An Archaeological Watching Brief at Vaughan College, Leicester (SK 5817 0451); ULAS Report 1999-061* (Unpublished Report). SLC286.
- <7> **Pevsner, N. (with Williamson, E.)**, 1984, *The Buildings of England: Leicestershire and Rutland., p.207* (Bibliographic reference). SLC15.
- <8> **Page, W (ed.)**, 1907, *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Leicestershire, p.181-208* (Monograph). SLC16.
- <9> **The Leicestershire Archaeological & Historical Society**, 1866-1920, *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, Vo. 44 (1968-9)* (Article in serial). SLC2.
- <10> **The Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies**, 1910-present, *The Journal of Roman Studies, Vol. 28, p.183* (Bibliographic reference). SLC67.
- <11> **Wacher, J.**, 1974, *The Towns of Roman Britain, p.337 & p.342-343* (Monograph). SLC423.
- <12> **Jarvis, P.**, 1986, *The early pits of the Jewry Wall site, Leicester. Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* (Article in serial). SLC1077.
- <13> **Mitchell, S., Poulter, J.**, 2023, *The Case for a Possible Roman Transport Canal into Leicester. In Itinera Vol. III*
The Case for a Possible Roman Transport Canal into Leicester. In Itinera Vol. III, p.105-144 (Article in serial). SLC1111.

Sources

- Article in serial: Speed, G. 2024. A Thermae and Aqueduct in Roman Leicester: Recent Discoveries at Jewry Wall and The Raw Dykes. In Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, Vol 97. 97. p.41-74
- (1) Bibliographic reference: Goddard, J. 1864. The Jewry Wall. In Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society. Vol. 2. p.202
 - (2) Monograph: Kenyon, K.. 1948. Excavations at the Jewry Wall Site, Leicester. 15.
 - (3) Unpublished document: Liddle, P.. 1983. A Guide to 20 Archaeological Sites in Leicestershire. p.28-29
 - (4) Scheduling record: English Heritage. 1996. Jewry Wall: remains of a Roman bath house, palaestra and Anglo-Saxon church. 17154. 17154
 - (5) Unpublished Report: Harvey, D.. 1996. Vaughan College. Desk-based Assessment.
 - (6) Unpublished Report: Gnanaratnam, A.. 1999. An Archaeological Watching Brief at Vaughan College, Leicester (SK 5817 0451); ULAS Report 1999-061. Watching Brief.
 - (7) Bibliographic reference: Pevsner, N. (with Williamson, E.). 1984. The Buildings of England: Leicestershire and Rutland.. p.207
 - (8) Monograph: Page, W (ed.). 1907. The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Leicestershire. 1. p.181-208
 - (9) Article in serial: The Leicestershire Archaeological & Historical Society. 1866-1920. Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society. 1-15. Vo. 44 (1968-9)
 - (10) Bibliographic reference: The Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies. 1910-present. The Journal of Roman Studies. Vol. 28, p.183
 - (11) Monograph: Wacher, J.. 1974. The Towns of Roman Britain. p.337 & p.342-343
 - (12) Article in serial: Jarvis, P. 1986. The early pits of the Jewry Wall site, Leicester. Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society. 60.
 - (13) Article in serial: Mitchell, S., Poulter, J. 2023. The Case for a Possible Roman Transport Canal into Leicester. In Itinera Vol. III
 The Case for a Possible Roman Transport Canal into Leicester. In Itinera Vol. III. 3. p.105-144

Associated resources

- Web page <https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archsearch/record.xhtml>
 Ratae Corieltavorum - ADS
- Web page https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=867010&resourceID=19191
 Historic England Research Records: The Jewry Wall
- Web page https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=450baed4-1b62-469d-9840-0eb6a17193a0&resourceID=19191
 Historic England Research Records: Monument Number 867039

Location**National Grid Reference**

Centred SK 582 044 (97m by 99m)

SK50SE

Area

Administrative Areas

Ward

Abbey, Leicester

Address/Historic Names - None recorded**Designations, Statuses and Scorings****Associated Designations**

Listed Building (I) - 1074773

JEWRY WALL

Active

DLC85

Scheduled Monument - 1013312

Jewry Wall: remains of a Roman bath house, palaestra and Anglo-Saxon church

Active

DLC20

Other Statuses and Cross-References

Historic England Monument UID - 867039

Active

Historic England Monument UID - 867010

Active

Archaeological Alert Area

Active

Historic England Monument UID - 631558

Active

Old SMR Ref - 50SE FT

Active

Ratings and Scorings - None recorded**Land Use****Associated Historic Landscape Character Records**

HLE16831 Civic and Commercial - Commercial and Retail (Type Code: CAM-69)

HLE16842 Civic and Commercial - Municipal and Civic (Type Code: CAM-66)

Other Land Classes

Geology

Sand & gravel

Landuse

In use as building

Landuse

In use as building

Related Monuments

MLC72	Ratae Corieltavorum	Hierarchical
MLC3212	Jewry Wall, N side	Hierarchical
MLC3243	Drain for Roman baths, Jewry Wall	Hierarchical
MLC3248	Water Tank or Tower(?), Jewry Wall	Hierarchical
MLC2180	Changing rooms?	Hierarchical
MLC2181	Changing rooms?	Hierarchical
MLC2182	Labrum?	Hierarchical
MLC2183	Labrum? (Room VIII)	Hierarchical
MLC2184	Tepidarium?	Hierarchical
MLC2186	Caldarium?	Hierarchical
MLC2187	Furnace for Roman Baths	Hierarchical
MLC2188	Furnace for Roman Baths	Hierarchical
MLC2189	Furnace for Roman Baths	Hierarchical
MLC2487	Jewry Wall Access Ramp Trench 1	Hierarchical
MLC2488	Jewry Wall Access Ramp Trench 2	Hierarchical
MLC2489	Jewry Wall Access Ramp Trench 3	Hierarchical
MLC2490	Jewry Wall Access Ramp Trench 4	Hierarchical
MLC2491	Jewry Wall Access Ramp Trench 5	Hierarchical
MLC2492	Jewry Wall Access Ramp Trench 6	Hierarchical

HER Number	MLC67	Site Name	Roman bath complex
MLC2601	Jewry Wall Access Ramp Trench 7	Hierarchical	
MLC2602	Jewry Wall Access Ramp Trench 8	Hierarchical	
MLC2603	Jewry Wall Access Ramp Trench 9	Hierarchical	
MLC2605	Jewry Wall Access Ramp Trench 11	Hierarchical	
MLC2689	Jewry Wall Hoard	Hierarchical	
MLC2694	Jewry Wall	Hierarchical	
MLC3210	Jewry Wall Museum, N side of bath	Hierarchical	
MLC3211	Tessellated pavement and floors	Hierarchical	
MLC1798	Jewry Wall - remains of Roman Palaestra	Functional Association	
MLC2002	Vaughan College and Jewry Wall Museum	Chronological	

Associated Finds

FLC370	ARROWHEAD (1) (Roman - 43 AD? to 409 AD?)	
FLC371	VOTIVE MODEL (1) (Roman - 43 AD? to 409 AD?)	
FLC372	BEAD (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	
FLC373	STRAP FITTING (1) (Late Roman - 250 AD to 409 AD)	
FLC374	BRACELET (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	
FLC375	BROOCH (>10) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	COPPER ALLOY
FLC376	BUCKLE (1) (Late Roman - 250 AD to 409 AD)	METAL
FLC377	COIN (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	METAL
FLC378	COIN HOARD (>10) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	METAL
FLC379	COMB (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	
FLC380	EAR RING (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	
FLC381	GAMING PIECE (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	
FLC382	SHERD (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	GLASS
FLC383	KEY (LOCKING) (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	METAL
FLC384	LOCK (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	
FLC385	MOULD (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	
FLC386	NEEDLE (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	
FLC387	PENDANT (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	
FLC388	PIN (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	
FLC389	SHERD (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	POTTERY
FLC390	RING (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	GOLD
FLC391	SEAL BOX (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	
FLC392	SPATULA (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	
FLC393	SPINDLE WHORL (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	
FLC394	SPOON (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	
FLC395	STEELYARD (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	
FLC396	STRAP FITTING (1) (Late Roman - 250 AD to 409 AD)	
FLC397	STYLUS (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	
FLC398	TILE (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	
FLC399	NAIL CLEANER (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	
FLC400	WEIGHT (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	
FLC401	WHETSTONE (1) (Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD)	

Associated Events/Activities

ELC747	Jewry Wall Site (Event - Intervention)
ELC615	Vaughan College Watching Brief (Event - Intervention. Ref: A52.1997)
ELC732	Vaughan College, Jewry Wall site (Event - Intervention. Ref: A5.2004)
ELC963	Test pit excavations at Jewry Wall (Event - Intervention. Ref: A7.2016)
ELC1010	Archaeological Watching Brief at Jewry Wall Museum (Event - Intervention. Ref: A8.2017)
ELC1002	Jewry Wall Excavation, S side of bath house (Event - Intervention. Ref: A1.2018)
ELC1003	Jewry Wall Evaluation, N side of bath house (Event - Intervention. Ref: A1.2018)

HER Number MLC67

Site Name Roman bath complex

Associated Individuals/Organisations - None recorded
