THE FRIENDS OF
SHEFFIELD CASTLE

Our blueprint for the site of Sheffield Castle

The site of Sheffield Castle and the history of it really is an incredible story. Quite simply, this site is where it all began for what is today, one of Britain's major cities.

"This project, and the blueprint put forward by the Friends, seeks to reconnect the city with its past right at the moment that it is increasingly moving forward with confidence and being reborn as a modern 21st century city. That's why the opportunity before us is so exciting."

Sir Tony Robinson
Patron of Friends of Sheffield Castle

Our blueprint for the site of Sheffield Castle

Supporting a stunning, high quality redevelopment of Sheffield's castle site that interprets this major piece of the city's history forms the core of our vision.

The Friends of Sheffield Castle (FoSC) came together as a varied group of individuals with one common goal. Passionate about Sheffield's historic origins around the confluence of the Rivers Sheaf and Don and the castle that once stood there, we have always believed that the site of Sheffield Castle, one of the largest and most significant in England, can once again be an important part of the city in the 21st century and inspire a new generation of Sheffielders and visitors.

The good news is that, whilst the castle no longer stands proud on our skyline, the site's history, and some of the remains of the castle, survive beneath our feet. The demolition of Castle Market, which stood on the site for decades until its demolition in 2015, opened up the opportunity to explore what castle remains might still exist, alongside the remnants we knew of that were locked away in dark voids beneath the market.

Sheffield City Council funded targeted archaeological evaluation trenching across the site in 2017/18. These have revealed significant structural remains, along with a wide range of features and artefacts that reveal the pre-castle, castle and post-castle history. These discoveries open up a unique opportunity that must be grasped to enable a distinctive and eye-catching redevelopment that will capture the local and national imagination. It is the opportunity to reveal to Sheffield its true origins, to connect the public and visitors with a greater sense of the longevity of Sheffield's existence and where we came from. Some of the most exciting and interesting cities in the world are those that demonstrate an ability to adapt, change and grow throughout the ages. This is the opportunity before Sheffield now.

We believe the castle site can play an important role in demonstrating Sheffield's own journey through history, from pre-Conquest to the medieval times of the castle; from the English Civil war, to its role at the heart of the industrial revolution and beyond.

Sheffield's market charter was granted under royal decree by Edward I in 1296; trading has been the heart and soul of this site ever since. Our blueprint recognises this history. It is a plan that allows our shared heritage to shape Sheffield's contemporary regeneration and its dynamic and creative future. It seeks to combine the history and heritage of the site, with the contemporary regeneration of a Sheffield in the 21st century, witnessed by the creative and digital industries, reinvention of areas like Kelham Island, Heart of the City II, The Outdoor City, and advanced manufacturing.

This blueprint is not intended to be an inflexible, prescriptive instruction. It is a vision, a framework of ideas for a future that encapsulates the outcome of years of consultation and discussion across city stakeholders. FoSC looks to play its role in contributing to that future, in partnership with Sheffield City Council, developer/s and others. Partnership and distinctiveness are key to the success of modern cities. Through this blueprint and the continued support and commitment of our members, we want to be a part of that success. Our blueprint is one of many contributions we hope to make.

Land Uses

A site that contributes to heritage, the economy and vibrancy

We are clear that the preservation and display of the castle remains is an essential ingredient of the future of the site. However, we also recognise that Castlegate has suffered from economic decline for many years and needs regeneration.

- We believe that appropriate commercial development and the display of heritage remains, including an element of reconstruction or modern interpretation, can be part of a dynamic and sustainable mixed use for the site.
- The castle remains and reconstruction or interpretation would help to provide a point of difference and unique identity for the area, rooted in the origins of the city.
- Appropriate commercial and residential development, in specific locations, will help to ensure development is viable and will add vibrancy and footfall to the area.
- Offices, residential space and hotels would ensure the site is populated throughout the day and evening and that bars, cafés, restaurants and shops within the development and immediate surrounds are sustainable.
- High quality public space and convenient through routes will ensure an area is created in which people want to spend time.

Types of Activity

A place where people want to spend time

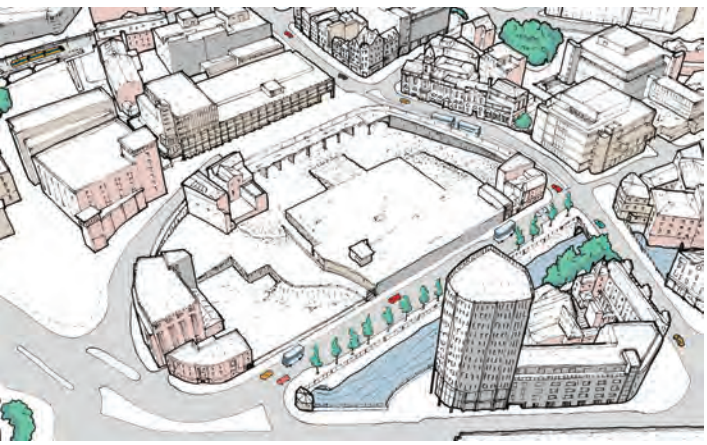
In some cities, areas of heritage display can become forgotten, sterile areas on the fringe of activity. Such an outcome would be a missed opportunity for Sheffield. The site was a hub of activity in medieval times and it should be once again, in a modern context.

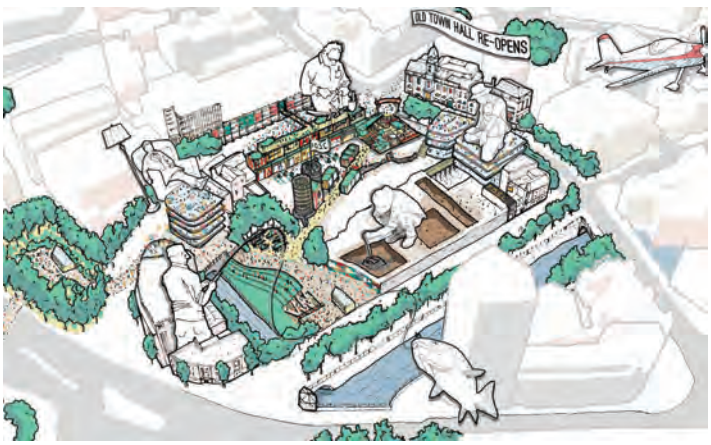
- Commerce and residential development will deliver footfall and a neighbourhood community focus.
- High quality public space will provide an attractive outdoor area for people to gather and relax.
- Bars and restaurants on the ground floor of developments, on terraces and on the river frontage will attract more visitors and create a buzz in the area.
- Artisan craft shops will create interest, attract visitors and relate to the mercantile history of the site.
- Performance space will provide a focal point for the city to showcase its cultural talent and help to activate the area further.
- All uses would contribute to the setting for the display of castle remains and some form of visitor / information / interpretation centre.

Castle Site Map

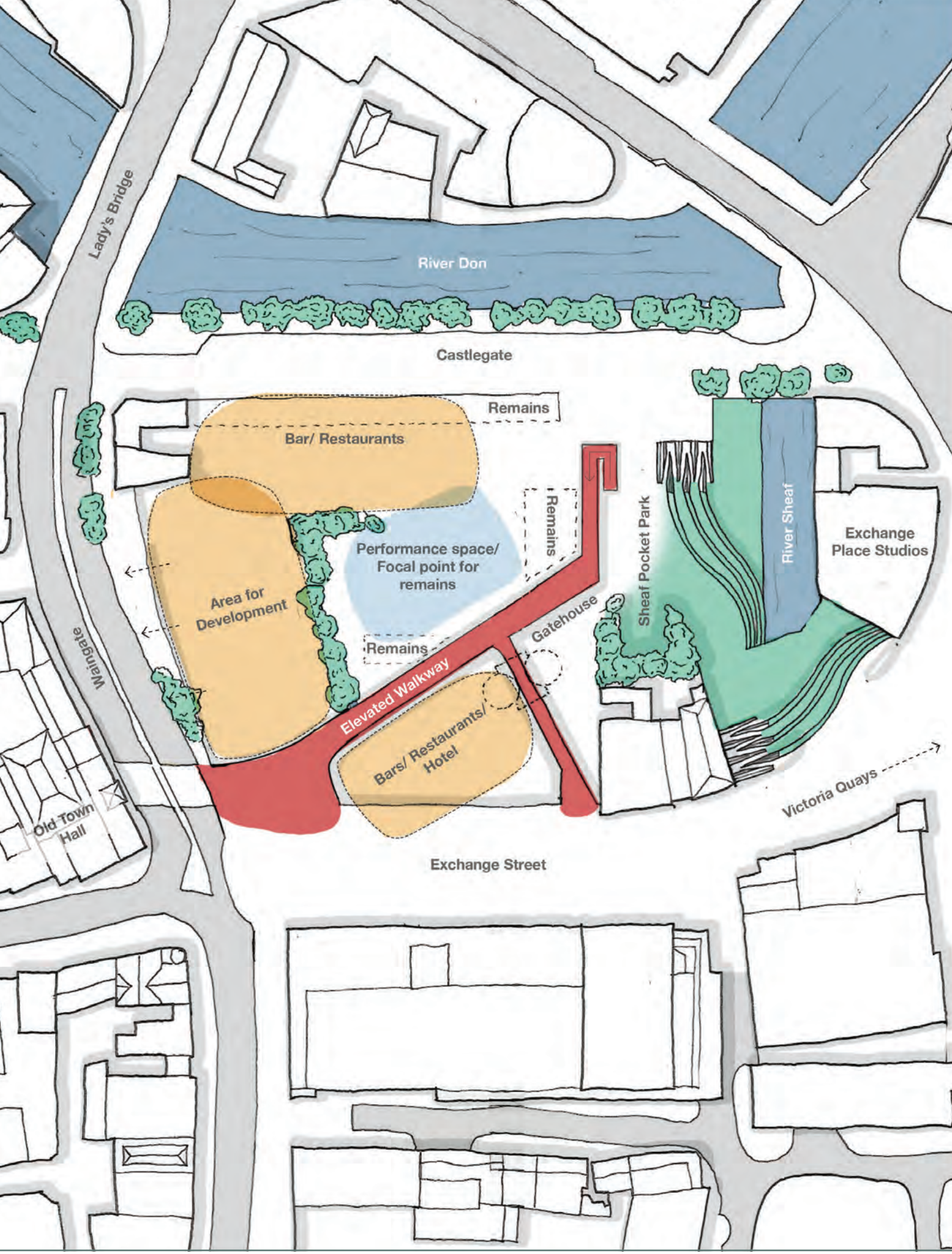
The images were designed by Sheffield University School of Architecture students in 2016.

This was a collaboration between the University of Sheffield and Friends of Sheffield Castle as a Live Project to think about the re-activation of the site of the castle by designing meanwhile and future uses.





Images © Revealing the Castle 2016


Lady's Bridge
River Don
Castlegate
Remains
Bar/ Restaurants
Performance space/
Focal point for
remains
Remains
Area for
Development
Remains
Gatehouse
Sheaf Pocket Park
River Sheaf
Exchange
Place Studios
Waingate
Elevated Walkway
Bars/ Restaurants/
Hotel
Old Town
Hall
Victoria Quays
Exchange Street

Display of the Castle Remains

Sensitive yet exciting, interpretation and display

The display of the remains of Sheffield Castle, alongside finds from other periods in the history of the site, should be the focal point of a new dynamic and distinct city centre district. In order to achieve this, it is essential that history is brought to life in a way that enthuses and engages the public. The opportunity to ensure the remains can be seen from a new public through route across the entire site would ensure the history is as accessible as possible to the widest possible audience.

- The area of remains should be the location of an adjacent heritage visitor centre, to include information on the history of the site and signposting to other key heritage assets in Sheffield and the City Region, including the Anglican Cathedral, Lady's Bridge, the Old Queen's Head Pub, Bishop's House, Manor Lodge, Carbrook Hall, Hill Top Chapel and Weston Park Museum.
- A reconstruction of the castle gatehouse, on its original site, would offer a view across the site allowing visitors to appreciate the extent and layout of the original castle and its location at the confluence of the Rivers Don and Sheaf. Equally, a modern interpretation could work equally well, offering interesting new ways to represent the castle that could change over time. Both would provide an interesting backdrop to the visitor centre, engaging the imagination of visitors.
- The castle remains are located below ground level. They should be viewable from:
    - A public through route across the site, elevated on the sections above the remains;
    - The top of a potential reconstructed gatehouse.
- The use of digital interpretation through technology such as information apps and virtual reality headsets is now accessible and could play a significant role in showing visitors what the site and Castlegate was like in medieval times.
- The remains should be illuminated at night, along with surrounding buildings and a possible reconstructed gatehouse, to provide a further attraction and interest to the area in the evening.
- The suggested performance space could be focused around spaces surrounding the remains, adding to the interest of the site, as has been done elsewhere at sites such as Carcassonne.

Existing remains of Sheffield Castle from 1950s

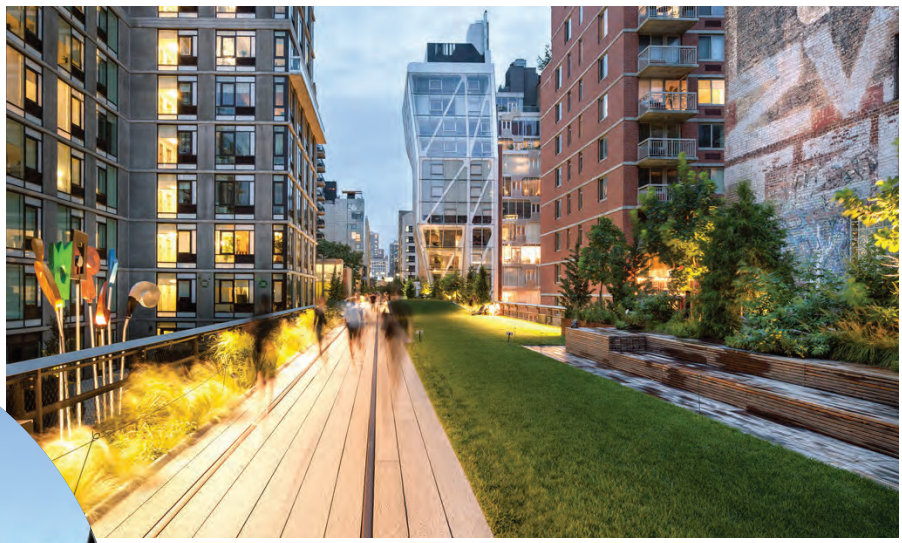
CGI suppied by the University of Sheffield of what Sheffield Castle looked like in the medieval times

Connectivity and Linkages

Reconnecting Victoria Quays to the city centre

The castle site sits in a crucial location between the traditional core of the city centre, Victoria Quays and the hotel district. As city regeneration gathers pace and city centre regeneration spreads outward from this core, the opportunity exists to not only create an attractive new district around the castle site, but to improve the connectivity within this part of the city to the benefit of the wider city centre.

- A new high quality public through route should transect the castle site, running from the top of Waingate to Victoria Quays.
- The public through route would feature a walkway, elevated above the displays of the castle remains below as it transects this section of the site, giving an impressive vista, framing the Old Town Hall on the approach from Victoria Quays. An elevated walkway would create an attractive and convenient through route for people travelling between Victoria Quays and the surrounding hotels to the castle site, and on to Fargate and the Heart of the City commercial centre.
- An attractive public through route would deliver increased numbers of people to the castle site and connect into the Grey to Green enhancements underway in the area and the newly uncovered section of the River Sheaf pocket park.



Rivers and Green Spaces

Contributing to Sheffield's quality public spaces and identity as The Outdoor City

The castle site sits at the confluence of Sheffield's two most prominent rivers, the Sheaf (which gave its name to the city) and the Don (after which Doncaster is named). Each played a key role in the life of Sheffield Castle, with both forming part of the moat and wider defences of the castle.

During the Industrial Revolution these rivers were built over beneath culverts, hidden away. Now, Sheffield City Council is planning to use the opportunity of regenerating the castle site to once again open up a section of the Sheaf as it flows across the north-east of the site.

- We fully support the plan to de-culvert the River Sheaf along the section running adjacent to the castle site, contributing to the heritage of the area by uncovering part of the castle's former defences and helping to make sense of its positioning.
- The plans for a pocket park and associated biodiversity improvements around the open section of the River Sheaf would enhance the area as a place for people to spend time as well as providing an attractive setting that encourages wider investment and development in the area.
- The river pocket park would also complement the Grey to Green works being implemented along Castlegate and Exchange Place just outside the site boundary.

Image by Sheffield City Council

Next Steps

This document has been developed by the Friends of Sheffield Castle and its membership to set out an ambitious blueprint for what we believe will deliver the best outcome for the site of Sheffield Castle.

It would deliver the display of the history of the site and castle remains through a vision that would reconnect the people of Sheffield with its long history. It also recognises the needs of the current and future Sheffield. It sets out a bold blueprint for how this can be successfully combined with the history of the site to create an inspirational and dynamic district in the city centre that will create a distinctive draw for Sheffield.

We believe that to achieve a highly successful development, with a national profile, a partnership approach will be key to bringing all aspects of regeneration forward. It will require both public and private sector funding to make it a reality.

We do not say that ours is the only possible blueprint. But we do believe it is imaginative, ambitious, dynamic, and above all, deliverable within realistic timescales. We recognise the value of partnership and would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the future of the site, working with Sheffield City Council, developers and others.

We look forward to contributing to the next chapter in the long and proud history of this site and the story of Sheffield.

Castle Site Timeline

1086	Domesday Book records Earl Waltheof, (Anglo-Saxon) Lord of Hallamshire, having a hall, believed to be on the site of the later castle
c. 1120	William de Lovetot (a Norman) becomes Lord of Hallamshire and is believed to have built a castle
1184	First reference to 'Castellum de Seldfeld' (Sheffield Castle)
1266	Sheffield Castle destroyed by supporters of Simon de Montfort's rebellion
1270	The charter was given for Thomas De Furnival to 'crenellate' the caste which was then completed in 1270
1442	A 'Great Tower' was recorded at the site, also a Great Tower, Great Gate, a bakehouse, kitchen, prison and 'a hospiteum'
1400's	Ownership passed from the De Furnivals to the Nevilles and then to John Talbot, renowned figure of the Hundred Years War
15th cent	Sheffield manor court rolls record expenditure on repairs to the castle
1570	Mary Queen of Scots arrives a prisoner at the Castle and stays for 14 years
1582	Inventory of household goods of George, Earl of Shrewsbury, describes the castle and its contents
1586	Inventory of armour in the castle
1637	John Harrison's survey gives a precise description of the castle
1642	Sir John Gell's Parliamentary forces occupy the castle
1643	Royalist forces retake the castle
1644	Following heavy bombardment the Royalist forces surrender
1646	House of Commons resolves to make the castle untenable
1647	House of Commons resolves to demolish the castle
1648	Castle demolished (although parts of the footprint of the castle remains)
1736	Ralph Gosling's map of Sheffield depicts a walled bowling green on the castle site
1800's	The site becomes developed with small steel and tool works, cementation furnaces and slaughter houses on both the north and east sides
1927 – 1930	Castle Markets excavated
1972	In her role as Keeper of Antiquities at Sheffield City Museum, Pauline Beswick records exposed features of the castle on the north facing slope
1994	South Yorkshire Archaeology Service undertake a structural survey of the remains
2000/2001	ARCUS (Archaeological Research and Consultancy University of Sheffield) undertook a substantial body of evaluation work on site, including several trenches revealing remains of the castle and moat in the north and east of the site
2018	Evaluation trenching undertaken by Wessex Archaeology