

9 April, 2008

Mr Stephen Gardner,
Senior Conservation Officer,
Planning Services,
Palatine Hall,
Dalton Square,
Lancaster LA1 1PW.

Dear Stephen,

Lancaster: Roman Bath-House

The Committee of the Lancaster Archaeological and Historical Society has asked me to contact you again regarding the future of the Roman Bath-House on Castle Hill. As I'm sure you can imagine, we remain extremely concerned about the structural and general state of the site, particularly since we have heard 'on the grapevine' that some Council money that had been used for basic minimal care of the site has now been transferred to other projects. The question that comes to the fore now is 'how long can this state of affairs be allowed to continue before radical measures will have to be considered?' By this we mean the possibility that, if anything of the Bath-House is to be retained for future generations, the site may have to be back-filled and returned to grass. This would be a great pity, especially since the recent discovery of the Roman Cavalry Tombstone at Penny Street Bridge serves to emphasise the importance of Lancaster in the Roman scheme of things in the north west. It is also important to keep in mind that the Bath-House is part of an archaeological site about which our knowledge is as yet far from complete.

It is to be greatly regretted that the Society failed in its attempt last year to secure lottery funding to undertake a complete non-invasive survey of Castle Hill, as this would undoubtedly have enhanced our appreciation of the importance of the Bath-House. We shall re-submit our application this year, though with the level of lottery money that is currently being absorbed by the 2012 Olympics, I have doubts about the likelihood of success.

We would greatly appreciate any thoughts that you may have on all this, and would be grateful if you could pass on our misgivings to any colleagues whom you would regard as relevant to the matter. On our side, we shall keep you informed about our progress in re-submitting our lottery application, and any further thoughts that may arise in the course of local discussions on the future of the Bath-House site.

With best wishes,
Yours sincerely,

(Chair: Lancaster Archaeological and Historical Society)