

History and Archaeology of Castle Park

History

Castle Park is on the site of the original Saxon Settlement of Bristol built C10 and the slightly later, very grand, C11 Bristol Castle, demolished by Oliver Cromwell after an Act of Parliament in 1656. That created an opportunity to expand the city's medieval commercial quarter with many churches, multi-story warehouses and shops with residential premises above, many backing onto the river. Much of this splendid district remained untouched for centuries until the blitz of November 1940 during which the entire district was razed to the ground.

The grim ruins of the churches of St Peter and St Mary le Port are monuments to this destruction and a memorial to those who died in the bombings. The devastated area was used for car-parking for many years and was suggested as the location of a new Museum and Art Gallery, which never got built, whilst the archaeological remains were poorly preserved.

Finally, the area was laid out as a park in the 1970s and imaginative developments have since added attractive fittings, plantings, walks, water features and works of art.

This is one of the oldest continually inhabited sites in the city.

Archaeology

At the north east end of the park there are a few remains of the keep and curtain wall of the C11 Bristol Castle. These features have been preserved and clearly identified with site markers and historical information.