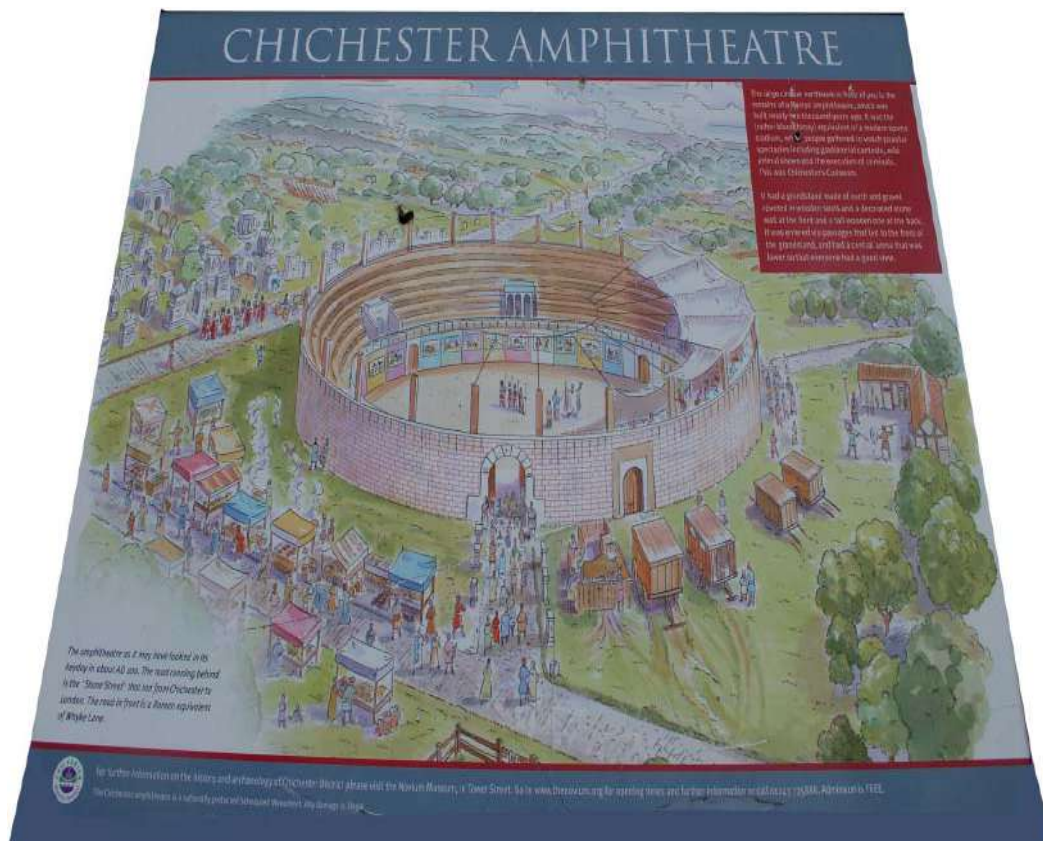


# Amphitheatre Park Chichester City Centre

29th October 2020

craft:pegg

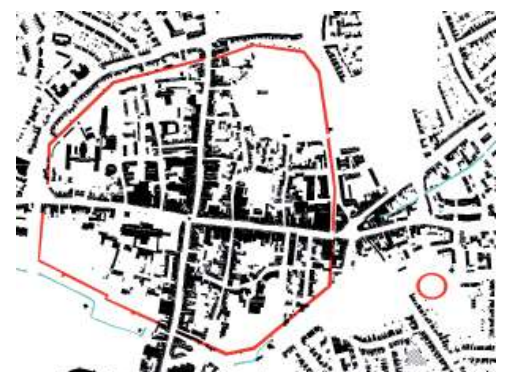




Chichester City has one of only a handful of Roman Amphitheatres discovered in Britain. Yet the site, whilst a Scheduled Monument, lies barely remarked in a small, grassed park South East of the City Centre. As the significance of quality open space rises and the desire to celebrate authentic and specific place identity grows there is a clear case to “make more of” Chichester’s oldest and least invested public theatre.

The amphitheatre’s oval form is still distinctly visible on the ground, the original gravel bank surviving for 3200 years albeit with its southern edge nibbled by housing and a deliberately nondescript character pasted over it, marked only with a sign board hinting at a far more glorious architectural pre-cursor to the current park.

Addressing the park and feature with modest changes and investments could make the amphitheatre park a new active component of the interpretive and activity strategy for the city. This could provide an informal outdoor classroom and performance space for use through most of the year. Addition attention to the detailed design of the site and its perimeter could create a quality open space close to the city centre and some of the city’s more deprived wards.



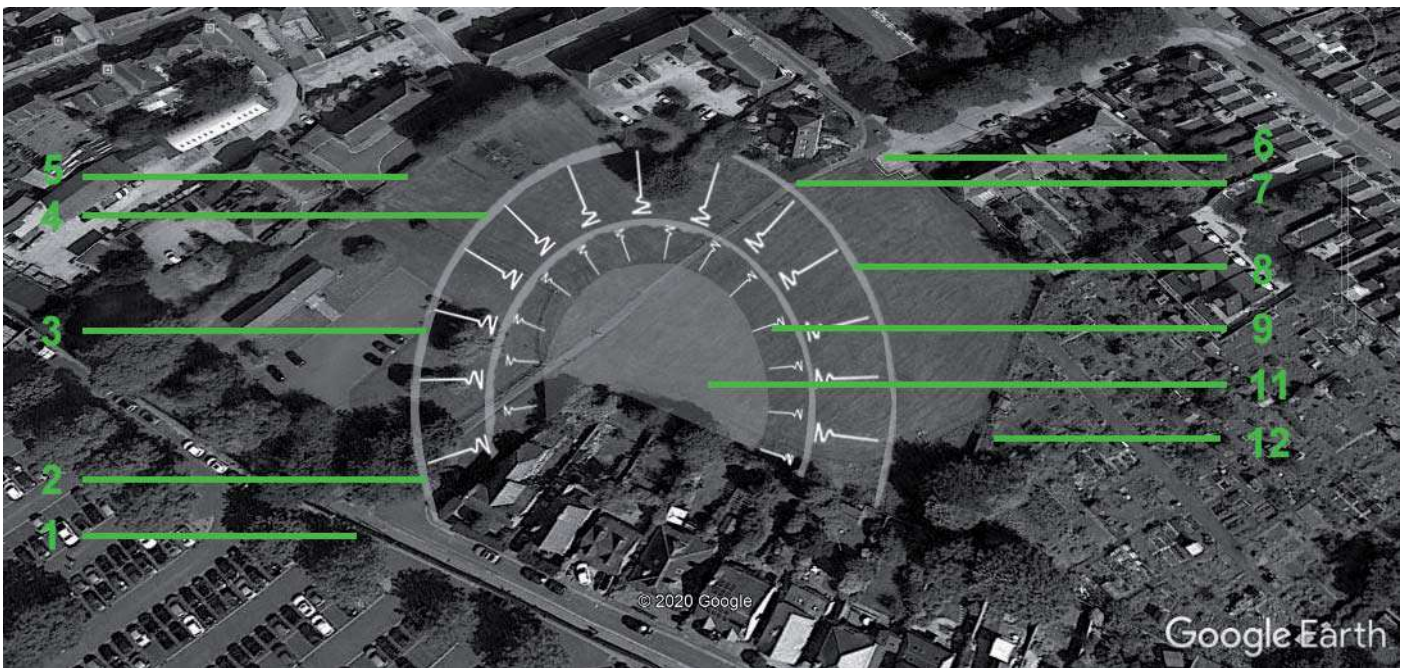
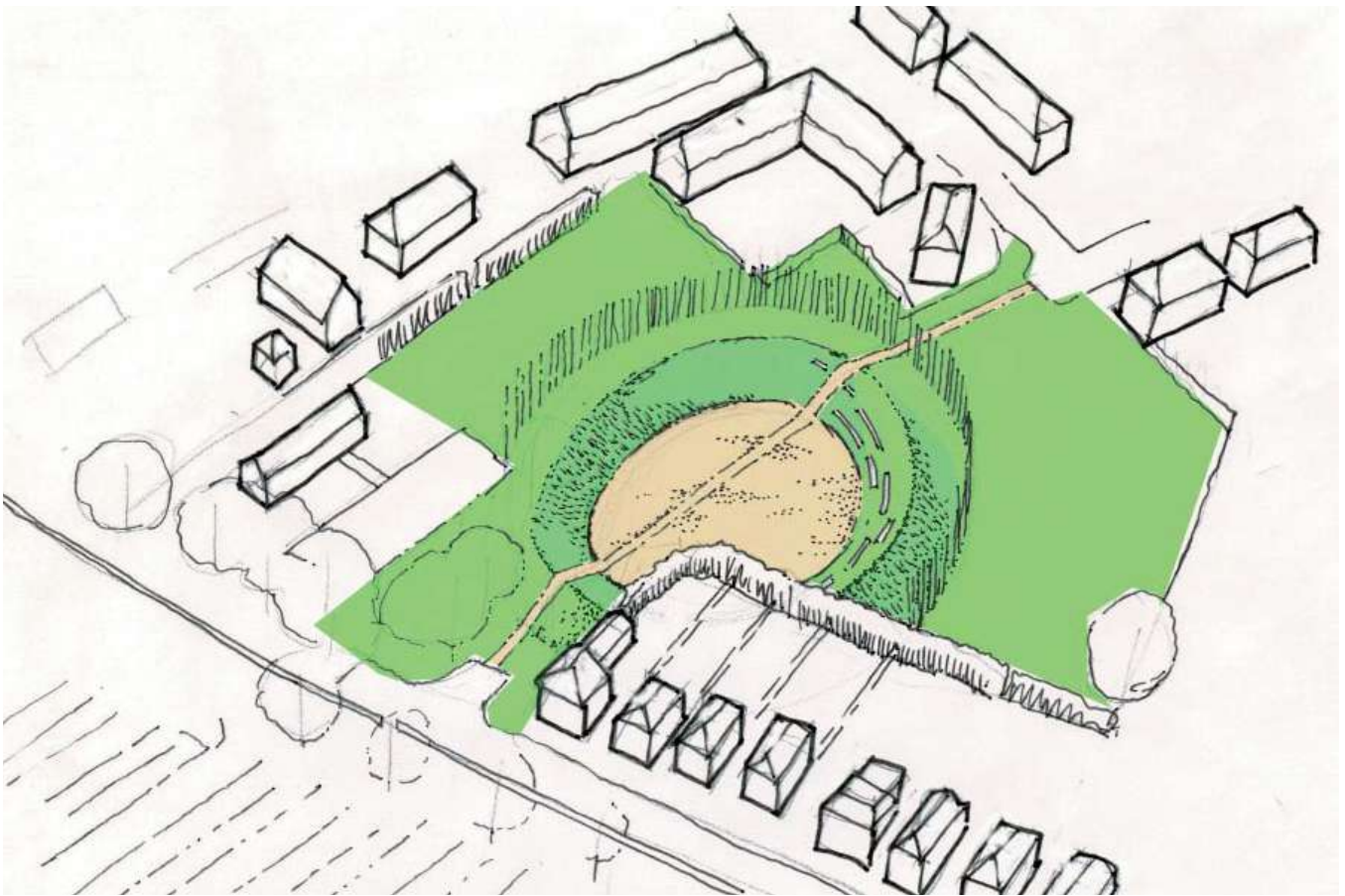


Evidence suggests the form of the original amphitheatre was a gravel bank with timber seating. the bank is still extant and stands out as an obvious feature in lidar images of the city. These also indicate how the original form has spread somewhat to a lower angled slope which has, in a number of places, been over built by adjacent gardens and structures.

Marking the internal and external perimeters of the amphitheatre will bring the feature back to the city as a visible presence. Marking the “stage” surface will add to this effect dramatically returning Chichester’s first stage back to the city where the theatre remains a national treasure.

This can all be achieved whilst significantly improving the play, ecology and community value that the park already exhibits. Improving play provision, creating interest in the city’s history, providing new planted features and setting the quality bar to the same as the City’s other parks are a clear and achievable goal through careful design moves and modest investment.





- 1 Car Park Entrance
- 2 Whyke Lane Entrance
- 3 Church Plot
- 4 Marker Line
- 5 Perimeter Hedge
- 6 Velyn Avenue Entrance
- 7 Access path
- 8 Marker Line
- 9 Seating
- 10 Stage
- 11 Allotment Edge

## 1 Car Park Entrance



The entrance from the Cattle Market Car Park is hidden, convoluted and cluttered. The park link could be enhanced by making entrance more visible by introducing an obvious park link within the car park. This could be by signage, the removal of parking bays or the re-modelling of the existing perimeter wall.

## 2 Whyke Lane Entrance



The Whyke Lane entrance is dominated by utilitarian vehicular geometries subordinating the pedestrian experience and quality of the space. The road area could be redesignated a shared surface due to low traffic volumes with clear pedestrian and spatial quality priorities. Gates, perimeter treatments, waste bins and street furniture should all be re-assessed and improved. The pedestrian dominated surface should be realigned and celebrate the park along with limited planting to screen poor adjacent perimeters and create character and scale.

### 3 Church Plot



The Amphitheatre site has historically been encroached on with boundaries that do not reflect the archaeological feature or in the case of the church, the scheduled area. The park perimeter with the church grounds forms a tight western entrance to the site. Dialogue should be established with the church regarding the potential to address the boundary alignment and the treatment of the feature in the church's ownership.

### 4 Marker Line



A simple boundary line of steel pins defines the outside foot of the gravel seating bank. This elegant line cannot have invasive footings so will be detailed as free sanding elements.. Density and height of post could vary depending on the intended visual effect and degree of enclosure required.

## 5 Perimeter Hedge



The site perimeter is comprised of a number of edge conditions. A simple hedge will be used to create unified green edge to the park.

## 6 Velyn Avenue Entrance



The entrance path will be relocated at this point to a centre line on the main gate. The entrance itself will be more celebratory and utilize tree planting to mark the park threshold.

## 7 Access Path



The line of the access path will be retained in most locations to avoid further construction excavation. The path will be resurfaced with a new wearing course and a chip and tar finish. The exception to the position of the path will be the Velyn Avenue entrance where the path will be centralized on the entrance.

## 8 Marker Line



A simple boundary line of steel pins defines the outside foot of the gravel seating bank. This elegant line cannot have invasive footings so will be detailed as free sanding elements.



## 9 Seating



In order to facilitate the use of the amphitheatre as a performance and outdoor classroom space seating will be reintroduced to the embankment in this location. The seating will be prefabricated and detailed to avoid any damaging excavation.

## 10 Stage



To articulate the form of the amphitheatre the “stage” area I shown in Breedon Gravel however continuation of the grass surface might also be viable depending on the level of use and degree of authenticity desired.

## 11 Allotment Edge



The southern site perimeter could be softened with the inclusion of accessible garden compounds for display gardens. This would counter the very brutish security fence which currently defines the allotment edge. The area outside the limits of the amphitheatre banks could be used for tree planting to provide an alternative to the open amenity grass areas.

