



Colbeck Castle Heritage Park Proposal



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Terms of Reference/Objectives

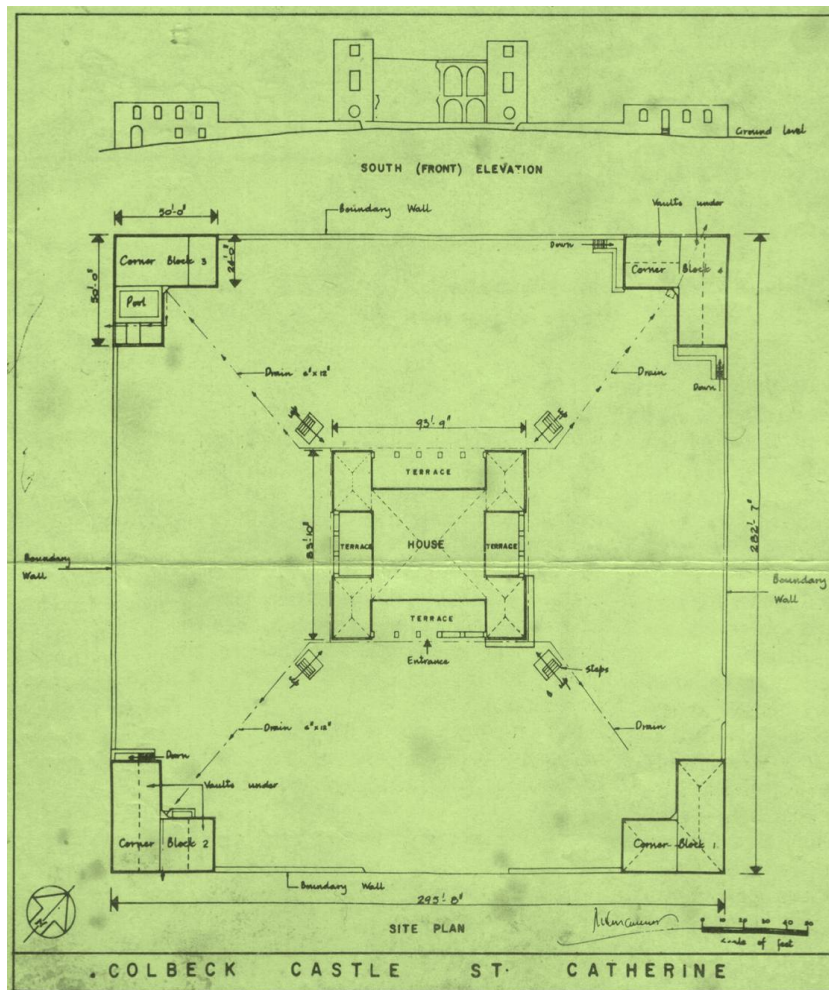
On February 24, 2010, a request was made to the Heritage Preservation Planning Unit to view and make recommendations for the aesthetic development of the historical site of Colbeck Castle. The site was viewed and the following are the observations and recommendations made.

Background

Colbeck Castle is a brick and a stone structure ruin, located two miles north of Old Harbour, St. Catherine and is 500 ft above sea level. The castle was believed to have been built by Colonel John Colbeck between 1670 and 1683. It is rectangular in shape consisting of four storied tower-like structures at each corner rising to a height of about 40 feet. There is considerable mystery associated with the construction and use of the site, as no one is sure if it was ever completed or lived in or the exact date it was built.

It is thought that the building may have been intended to be a part of the defense for the island, as a rallying point for the St. Dorothy and Clarendon militia. There are four out buildings associated with the main castle. It is thought that these buildings were used for domestic purposes.

Colbeck Castle became a National Monument in 1985 and was declared in 1990.



Map 1: Plan of Colbeck Castle, St. Catherine

Observations

There are several observations that were noted while visiting the site. On the journey to the site, there was only one sign marking the direction to the site and it was on the wrong side of the road, which increased the difficulty in reaching to the site. There are no signs indicating arrival to the property and there is also an absence of story boards on the property itself.

The grounds of the site have been cleared, however, much of the grounds have tree stumps and stones protruding from the surface (Plate 1 & 2). In addition, the size of the stumps indicates that they were large trees that would have been ideal for shade purposes.



Plate 1 & 2. Showing stumps and stones on surface

There is little or no grass growing on the property, instead there are several spots of weeds growing throughout the property. There are also, currently no trees or flowering plants on the property to enhance its beauty (Plate 3).



Plate 3. Showing weeds and cleared surface

To the right of the out-building by the entrance, there is a large sinkhole which has been used to dump garbage and other unused items. The hole is currently lined with zinc sheeting and is filled with dumped items (Plate 4).



Plate 4. Showing sinkhole with dumped items

There is also on the right side of the property, a large stone-like mound which is a part of the historical record, which is actually historical mortar thought to be used in the construction of the structure (Plate 5).



Plate 5. Showing historical mortar

Within the wall structure of the castle, there are trees, smaller plants and weeds growing within the walls and in the interior of the castle itself (Plate 6).



Plate 6. Showing growing plants in the crevices of the castle wall

Also, found within the out buildings at the four corners of the property are hanging roots and larger shrub-like plants. In addition, there are no roofs for the other buildings (Plate 7, 8 & 9).



Plate 7 & 8. Showing trees in wall crevices on outbuildings





Plate 9. Showing trees in wall crevices

There is evidence of support beams within some of the arches and windows of the castle (Plate 10). However, it was observed that in the arches and windows that do not have this support (Plate 11), some of the stones had loosened and have fallen out. Also, many of the wooden beams show evidence of being infested with termites (Plate 12).

Plate 10. Showing support beams



Plate 11. Showing arches without support beam

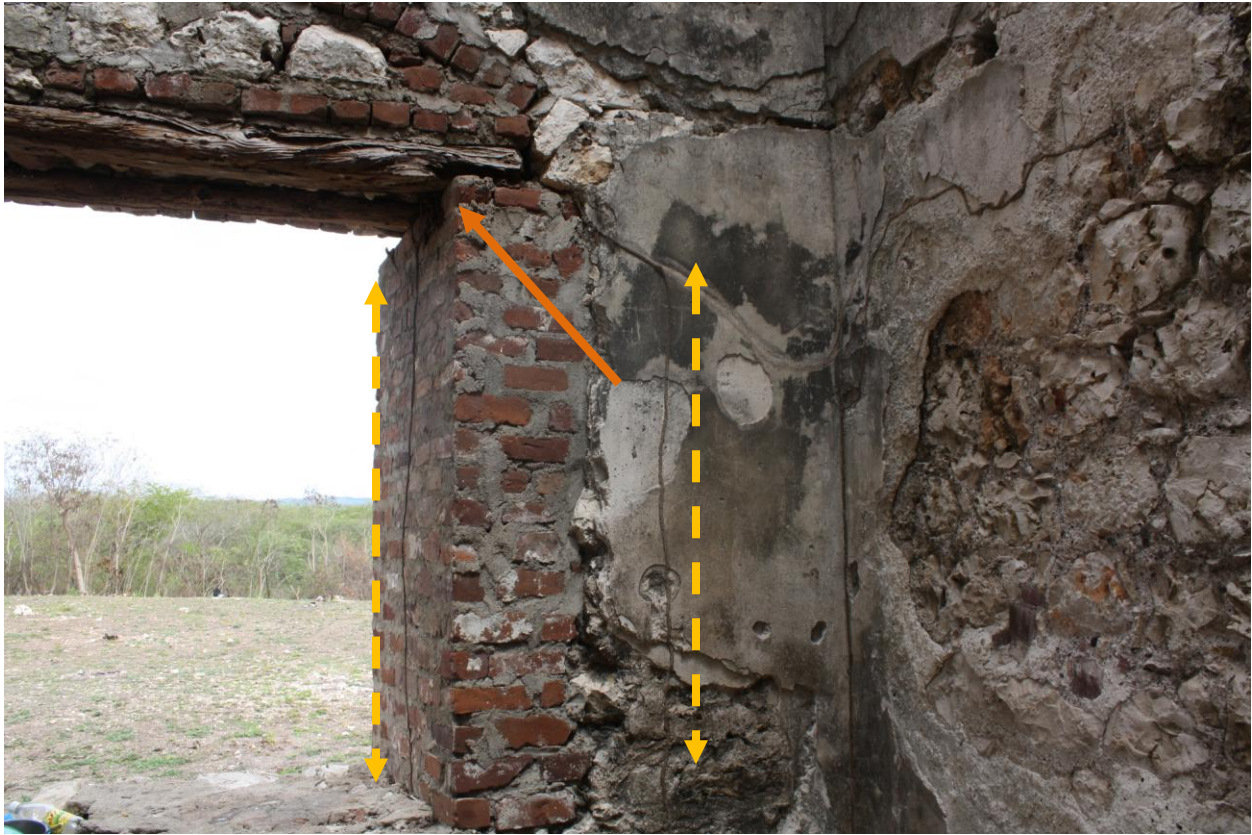


Plate 12. Termite infested wooden beams and trails on walls

Also observed is the absence of bathroom facilities and running water, which is imperative for any site which attracts visitors.

Recommendations

The concept of the site is that of a heritage park, with the historical structure as the main attraction and the plants, trees and flowers which are only those indigenous to Jamaica adding not only beauty but also an additional educational aspect to the site. The following are the recommendations for *Colbeck Castle Heritage Park*.

- **Signage and Story boards**

A total of at least 6 directional signs are needed for the site. Therefore, it is being recommended that signs be placed at the following locations:

1. After Spanish Town Round-A-Bout.
2. Mid way between Spanish Town and Old Harbour.
3. At the Old Harbour clock indicating the right-turn to the site.
4. The relocation of the Grace sponsored directional sign from the right side of the road to the opposite side, closer to the community sign.
5. One is also needed at the bridge to indicate that the site is located at the next left turn
6. Welcome sign at the entrance of the site.

Caution and **No Entry** signs should be placed on the property to prevent persons from entering any part of the building (s) that is proven unsafe.

Story boards for the site should be placed in front of the Castle and include a brief history of the site and its land usage over its past.

Additional storyboards should also be placed at the four out-buildings on the property to include the buildings' functions. In addition, a story board should be placed at the stone mortar.

- **Building Structure**

In considering recommendations for the building, wooden reinforcements must be placed at the windows and the arches of the castle that are structurally unstable. The termite infested wood has to be replaced before they completely break apart and result in injury to visitors to the site.

The weeds and hanging roots that currently protrudes from within the crevices of the walls and the interior of the castle and the out-buildings needs to be cleared with the assistance from Conservation personnel and the Forestry department to enable the preservation of the castle structure. As only one of the outbuildings has a semblance of a roof, it is recommended that roofs be placed on the other three buildings and the roof on the building nearest the entrance be repaired. These buildings can be used by visitors to the site as bars, food preparation, concessionaires or any other activity that will not result in adverse effects on the structures themselves.

Grounds

The general concept of the beautification of the site is a park, to include palm and other trees of various types and also exotic flowers (**See Master Plan: Colbeck Castle Heritage Park Proposal**). The site would attract target events such as family picnics, weddings and other special functions.

The recommendations regarding the grounds are as follows:

- All the tree stumps and large stones on the site should be removed to prevent anyone from being injured by tripping over them.
- The stone-like mound on the property which is historic mortar should be fenced around to prevent persons working on the site from damaging the mound. As part of the process, a flower bed could be placed around it to deter visitors from climbing on it and add to the site aesthetically.
- As the general concept of the property is a park, different types of trees indigenous to the Island could be planted throughout the property such

as the Blue Mahoe (Plate 13) and clusters of adult palm trees at specific points within the property along with indigenous exotic flowers similar to *impatiens* at the roots. In acquiring some of these plants and palms, suckers from fan palms currently at Seville could be obtained. Also, flowers from the Cinchona Botanical Gardens (Plate 14 & 15) located in the hills of St. Andrew can be obtained for the property. Labels for the plants would also be strategically placed to add an educational aspect to visits to the site. It is important to note that the trees used should not produce large spreading roots as these may damage remains underground and the structures above ground.

Plate 13. Showing Blue Mahoe Tree



Plate 14 & 15. Showing the Cinchona Botanical Gardens



- The property should be landscaped and fast growing grass planted throughout.
- It is recommended that walking paths be made using gravel in the short-term around the main structure, towards the out buildings and around the mound to reduce the traffic on the grassy areas of the site. In the medium to long term, the gravel can be replaced with decorative stone or brick.
- Flowers which require less watering could be placed along the periphery of the boundary wall on the outside to provide a hedge around the periphery of the property. A type of plant with thorny branches could be used to deter intruders. Ingenious type of plants (Plate 16-18) can be placed on the inside of the perimeter wall.



Plate 16. Hibiscus



Plate 17. Cat Tail



Plate 18. Heliconia

- The sinkhole near the first out-building must to be filled in to prevent the injury of any visitors.
- Concrete/Wrought Iron park benches can be placed along the periphery wall to provide seating and eating for visitors (Plate 19).



Plate 19. Cast Iron Table & Benches

- With regards to lighting of the site, spot lights can be used to highlight the building on special occasions. For regular lighting, antique lamp posts placed along the pathway would provide a secluded atmosphere for visitors to the property at night (Plate 20).

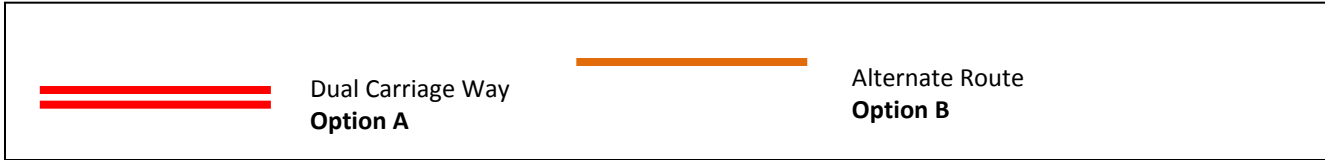
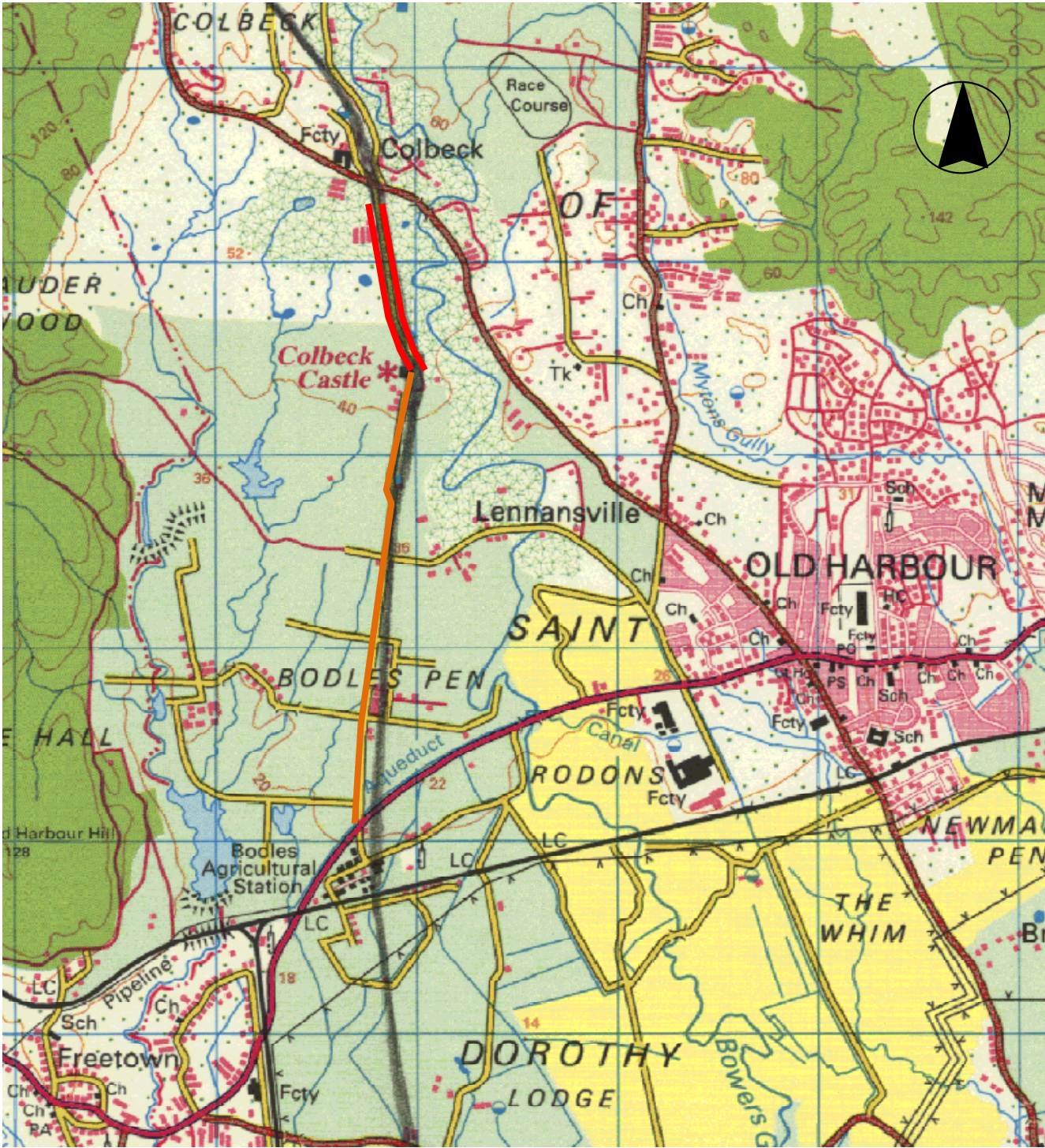


Plate 20. Antique lamp posts

Parking and Access

- The area directly across from the entrance to the property is the suggested site for the parking area, which will provide secure parking for events at the site. This area would require clearing. As the only access to and from the site is a single narrow, dirt road, one recommendation (**Option A**) is that this castle road access be expanded to form a dual carriage way, to allow for both entrance and exit, especially during big events. Another option (**Option B**) is that access to the site be made only from the Colbeck main road unto the castle road and exit via Bodles Pen road onto the Old Harbour to Free Town main road in the vicinity of the Bodles Agricultural Station (**Map 2: Colbeck Castle Traffic Management Proposal**).

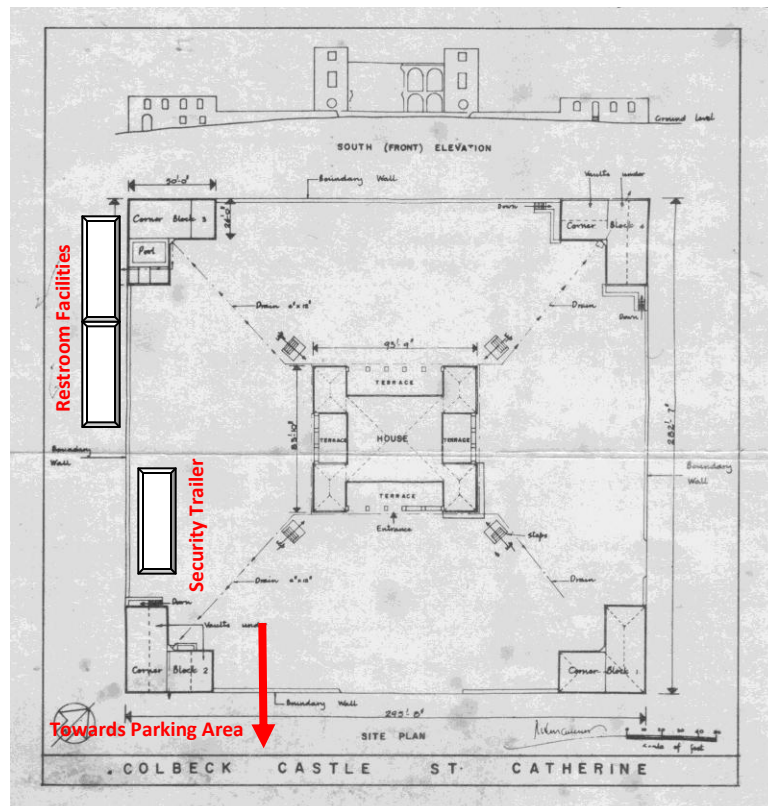
Map 2: Colbeck Castle Traffic Management Proposal



Facilities

- Bathroom facilities (male and female) must be made available for patrons to the site. The recommendation is that two re-conditioned containers, similar to the one used for security purposes, be placed just outside the boundary wall as indicated on **Map 3**. The containers should have access to running water and be separated to create at least four restroom facilities. For larger events, portable bathroom facilities may be required, at the expense of the event promoters.
- Both the security and restroom containers should be camouflaged by planting flowers and palms around them, this will also shade the containers so that heat build-up will be reduced.
- An outside pipe is also required to provide for watering of plants and other uses.
- Tanks will also be required to store rain water to reduce cost and piped water consumption.

Map 3: Colbeck Castle Facilities Management Proposal



Conclusion

In order to foster a deeper appreciation of Colbeck Castle, its development is necessary. In its current state, the site does not allow for the maximization of its potential, but with the completion of the above mentioned recommendations the site can become a place of rest, recreation, and enjoyment for visitors. The proposal of the site as a heritage park is designed to appeal to a target clientele which include: families for picnics, students for educational and recreation, corporate and public events and weddings.

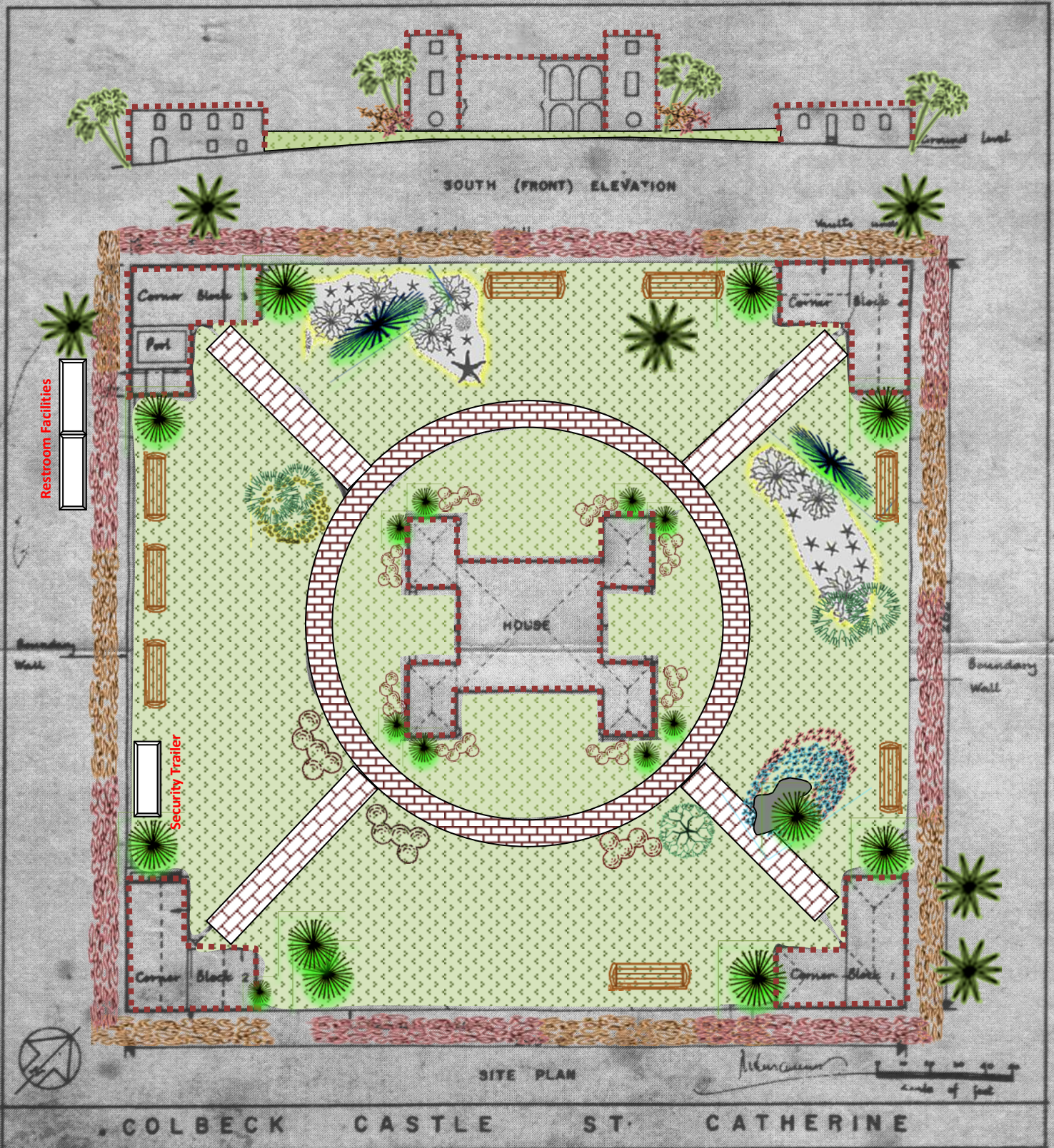
It is important to note however, that appropriate marketing of the site is necessary to attract persons to the property, as without it all the work carried out will not be of benefit.

It should be further noted that any work carried out on the site should involve the Archaeology division, as it is imperative that the archeological integrity of the site be protected.

Master Plan:

Colbeck Castle Heritage Park Proposal

Colbeck Castle Heritage Park Proposal



-  Palms
-  Grass
-  Cast Iron Bench
-  Brick walkway
-  Floral Edging
-  Castle outline