

Chapter 7: The structures of the public buildings in the later Roman period: framing place and space

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will review current knowledge and interpretations of public buildings in Romano-British towns and then an analysis of their known structural state in the later Roman period. This is necessary before the following chapters can examine the use of the buildings in the later Roman period. Analysis of the British data suggests that understanding of the public buildings is not always very comprehensive and assumptions have sometimes been made about the nature and function of the buildings from relatively limited evidence. The function is itself a complex subject: the buildings were not usually restricted to single roles, which adds a greater complication to the analysis of their late use. The location of the public buildings within the townscape, and their relationship with the landscape setting, are important factors to consider when examining their role and impact on the people using the towns.

Mackreth (1987) has defined the Roman public building as ‘a structure which was put up to fulfil a public function and was open to the public itself’. This can include buildings such as palaces because they had an administrative as well as residential function.¹²⁷ Black’s (1995) study of *mansiones* indicates that they could have a wider range of functions beyond their role in the *cursus publicus* (see section 7.8).¹²⁸ *Mansiones* are included in this study as are monuments such as town gates which were important points of passage and interaction. Monumental arches were also used in the organisation of space and the manipulation of movement (MacDonald 1986: 74); although often built for a specific commemoration, they were involved in ‘invoking things sacred and temporal’ (*ibid.*: 99).

¹²⁷ Although none have so far been identified in Britain, Lavan (2001c) has argued that the *praetoria* of the later Roman period – residences of the civil or military governor – also had a number of similar functions to public buildings including their role as places for ceremonies and administrative activities.

¹²⁸ The *cursus publicus* was the system by which messages and officials moved around the empire using the road network (E. Black 1995).

Buildings and their architecture defined public space but the ways that people experienced and interacted with the buildings contributed to the creation of their significance over time. In this respect, the monumental architecture itself would have only been one element in the significance of the places (see below; Häußler 1999; G. Woolf 2006). Large open areas could be important public spaces but they have rarely been considered in the same category as the public buildings, despite the possibility of having some comparable roles (see section 4.5.2). This aspect of the significance attached to space is important to consider when examining changes to public buildings in the late Roman period.

Evidence for architectural changes to the public buildings has often been described in terms of decline leading to the fall of towns (e.g. Liebeschuetz 2000; B. Ward-Perkins 2005). However, concentrating on the structural elements alone will only give a partial, and mainly negative, understanding of towns during the later Roman period. What needs to be considered further is evidence for the way in which the structures continued to frame activities and maintain their importance as places. Feld (1996: 91) remarks, ‘as place is sensed, senses are placed; as places make sense, senses make place’ – it is necessary to consider the ways in which the buildings were used and experienced.

Architecture is a stage for movement and interaction, where performances are enacted in physically and symbolically bounded space (Edensor 2000: 123). Walking within and around public buildings and using them will have contributed towards creating the meaning attached to them (Simonsen 2003: 167–8). This also applies to late Iron Age ‘*oppida*’ space: G. Woolf (2006), studying *oppida*, considers monuments as large-scale and visually prominent structures that are intimately related to their locations and intended to endure. They ‘proclaim a faith in (or aspiration towards) a remote posterity’ (*ibid.*: 270). Acknowledging the difficulties in dating late phases of structures including demolition/collapse, analysis of their structural state in the later Roman period indicates that at least parts of many of them survived into the late Roman and post-Roman periods; the buildings continued to impact on the landscape, as they had done in the earlier Roman period. Analysis of their use at this time in

the following chapters indicates that they were not merely empty shells. The public buildings remained prominent features of the landscape and the histories of the buildings continued the monumentality and symbolic nature of many of these places.

7.2 Studying public buildings

The post-colonial reaction to elitist and military themes within Roman archaeology (e.g. Mattingly ed. 1997a; J. Webster and Cooper eds. 1996) has led to an increase in studies of indigenous settlement and landscape patterns. These works are hugely welcome and have added significant information to our knowledge of Roman Britain (e.g. Fincham 2002; Flitcroft 2001; Hingley 1997a; Keevil and Booth 1997; K. Matthews 1997; Mudd *et al.* 1999; J. Taylor 2001). A consequence, however, has been a reduction in new syntheses of urban data. The reaction does not mean that our understanding of public buildings is complete and this attitude against them may at least partly be a result of the manner in which they have traditionally been approached and envisaged. In the Renaissance and post-medieval period, architects and scholars began to seek to understand Roman architecture and apply lessons derived from it to the buildings that they designed (S. Dyson 2006: 5; Thorpe 1995: 83–4). Indeed the early seventeenth century architect and designer Inigo Jones was described by a contemporary as ‘the Vitruvius of his age’ (Summerson 2000: 6).

Tilley, addressing prehistoric remains, defined architectural space as the ‘deliberate attempt to create and bound space, create an inside, an outside, a way round, a channel for movement’ (Tilley 1994: 17). The phenomenological approach to space, emphasising its creation through relations between people and place, has become influential within studies of monumental landscapes in prehistory as a reaction against the scientific conceptions of space of New Geography and New Archaeology (Tilley 1994: 7–8, 11). Studies have now attempted to understand how landscapes were experienced and understood, and how movement was conducted within and around them (Bender 1992; J. Thomas 1993; Tilley 1994; Witcher 1998). Both Favro (1996) and Boman (2003) have argued that the space that was enclosed by walls and roofs of Roman and Greek buildings was as important as the architecture itself.

Boman (2003) has explored Greek architecture and public space through the ways in which it permitted and denied movement; this influenced the conceptualisation and use of the space that was enclosed. Laurence's (1994) analysis of Pompeii also examined the way in which the public buildings controlled movement and created identities and experiences, especially as areas of propaganda.

Roman architectural structures can be studied as highly visible and enduring enclosing spaces, often reflecting power and wealth (Trigger 1990: 128), with significant buildings designed for maximum visual effect to communicate messages; buildings were 'stamped' with Roman ideology (Zanker 1989; 2000) and used to dominate and persuade (Häussler 1999). Many have studied the way in which Augustus rebuilt large parts of Rome in order to draw on the past and create a new mythology conveyed through visual imagery and architecture (e.g. Sear 1982: 49; Wallace-Hadrill 1993: 50; Zanker 1989: 4).¹²⁹ The public buildings within the towns of Roman Britain created new spaces at pre-existing sites, and this will have influenced the experiences of people who visited and moved through these buildings. Indigenous people will also have had their own concepts of space which will have influenced the ways that they experienced these buildings.

Studies of dedication inscriptions of public buildings in Roman Britain indicate that the way in which the public buildings were accepted and interpreted may have differed from other parts of the Empire; public munificence seems to have been low in Britain and, where it does occur, corporate rather than individual munificence seems to have been more the norm (Blagg 1990: 28). Altekamp (2001) has drawn attention to the fact that, from the surviving evidence, the public buildings in Roman Britain were less architecturally elaborate than those of other provinces; he believes that this may represent some kind of cultural reservation against them. Mattingly (2006a: 292) takes a similar stance: in his view the 'Golden Age' was far less golden than has usually been assumed. Altekamp's argument would certainly have

¹²⁹ Suetonius (*Aug.* XXIX.1; XXVIII.3) records how Augustus 'built many public works' and had found Rome built of 'brick and left it in marble'.

implications for understanding public buildings in the late Roman period, where absence of embellishment has often been seen as evidence of change and decline. It must also be acknowledged, however, that the architectural embellishments may have been removed at later dates. This possibility has been raised for the Silchester *basilica* (Diagram 11; Fulford and Timby 2000: 76) although there is insufficient evidence for any certainty.

7.3 The *forum-basilica* complex

The *forum* and *basilica* were, according to Zanker (2000: 34), who draws heavily upon the writings of Vitruvius in *De architectura*, the symbol of the town, occupying a central location. They were key features in the urban landscape providing, from an elite Roman viewpoint, the ‘stage and the facilities for an urban way of life’ (Häussler 1999: 5).

The *forum* was principally an open space that allowed public congregation, commercial, political, judicial, and religious events, and entertainments (Perring 1991b: 280–1; Perring 2002b; Thorpe 1995: 32). Some of the earliest were delimited in simple ways such as at Cosa, western Italy, where a small number of trees seem to have marked out its location (Gros 1996: 208), but over time, the *forum* became increasingly monumentalised, allowing movement to be controlled and creating a source of power and indoctrination (Perring 1991b: 280). Entering the *forum*, perhaps through monumental arches and colonnades, would have been a meaningful act for many: ‘to the visitor of any Roman *forum*, there unfolds the picture of power relationships’ (Häussler 1999: 6). *Fora* were not ‘neutral entities’ but charged with power and symbolism (Revell 1999: 57). Favro’s study of the Augustan Forum Romanum has demonstrated how visitors would have ‘experienced a carefully choreographed environment’ (1996: 198). She examined the way in which the walls of the Augustan period Forum Romanum were angled, the locations at which the statues and memorials were placed and the locations of the entry points.

Those using the structures in provinces such as Britain, where they were new phenomena, would have been encouraged to behave in a formalised manner (Revell 1999: 54). The evidence for the early phases of these buildings has perhaps contributed towards the negative

view of their use in the late Roman period, but we cannot assume that physical changes to the buildings necessarily indicate changes to the activities that occurred.

The *basilica* was usually an aisled hall, often laid out to standardised measurements (Walthew 1995). Its origins have been the subject of much debate, with suggestions including influences from Hellenic royal halls (Welch 2003), from the *principia* of a fort, which had similar functions (de la Bédoyère 1991: 86),¹³⁰ or origins as a covered market (J. Anderson 1997: 252–3; Grimal 1983: 45). Vitruvius writes that the ‘*basilica* should be situated adjoining the *forum*, on the warmest side, so that the merchants may assemble there in winter, without being inconvenienced by the cold’ (*De arch.* V.1.4). In Britain, the *basilica* was attached to one side of the *forum*, with which it had an integrated role. Its likely uses were for commerce, politics (including the location of the *curia* for town council meetings) and religious activity: shrines and temples were important parts of the *forum-basilica* complexes (Carter 1989; Häussler 1999: 6). In Britain it is generally assumed that the *curia* was part of the *basilica* building and that it was not a separate structure within the town. Not enough is known about the *basilica* building or the town plans to be definite about this and there is a possibility that the *curia* may have been in places other than the *basilica* in the later Roman period in Britain.

Knowledge of the *forum-basilica* complexes within each town in Roman Britain varies widely, with only the *basilica* hall at Silchester having been completely uncovered using modern excavation techniques. This excavation yielded the only definite examples of shrines from a *basilica* site in Britain (Fulford and Timby 2000), although even here the surrounding rooms and *forum* are poorly known. The complexes at Wroxeter (Atkinson 1942), Caerwent ([Diagram 1](#); Ashby 1906; Ashby *et al.* 1909) and Caistor-by-Norwich ([Diagram 2](#); Frere 1971) were excavated on a large scale, although not to modern standards, and have not all been

¹³⁰ In this book, evidence from the fortress *principia* at York is discussed. This *principia* may have functioned in a similar way to the *forum-basilica* of a town and no *forum-basilica* has yet been found at York, although it may have had one functioning alongside the *principia*.

published in detail. Care must be taken when considering its use, and this is especially the case for the late Roman period when the evidence is even more partial.

The *basilica* at Caerwent has since been re-excavated, although on a smaller scale and a possible *curia* has been identified through the discovery of the positions of timber benches and a table in one of the excavated rooms of the *basilica* (unpublished report from P. Guest; Brewer 2007); this is the only example discovered in Britain. At Wroxeter, it has been suggested that the large collection of metalwork comprising locks, hinges and a fragment of military diploma from within West Room 1 of the *basilica* indicated that this room was an office or archive (Atkinson 1942: 103; Revell 1999: 56) but other interpretations of the finds are possible, including a collection of metalwork for recycling (see chapter 8). At Cirencester (Diagram 4), Exeter (Diagram 6), Gloucester (Diagram 7), Leicester (Diagram 8), Lincoln (Diagram 9), London (Diagram 10), Verulamium (Diagram 12) and Winchester, only small areas of the buildings have been excavated at different times and often in disconnected parts. Even less is known of the buildings at Canterbury and Dorchester and nothing is known at some towns including Colchester (Diagram 5), Chichester and York.¹³¹ Structural changes to *forum* and *basilica* complexes are often considered to represent the early decline of the urban function and of governance within the town (Liebeschuetz 2000: 34, 41; Perring 1991b) but analysis here will emphasise where possible the continued importance of their function.

¹³¹ It is possible that in some cases identification has been based too directly on what is expected for a town, without much supporting evidence having been obtained about the character and function of the buildings. An example may be the large courtyard structure in the settlement at Corbridge (Bishop and Dore 1988: 105). This is still of uncertain function but has been interpreted as a *forum*, although the lack of evidence for a *basilica* was acknowledged (Burnham and Wachter 1990: 60). Birley and Richmond (1938: 252) suggested that the building was a storehouse and the possibility of a *macellum* has also been raised (Bishop and Dore 1988: 105).

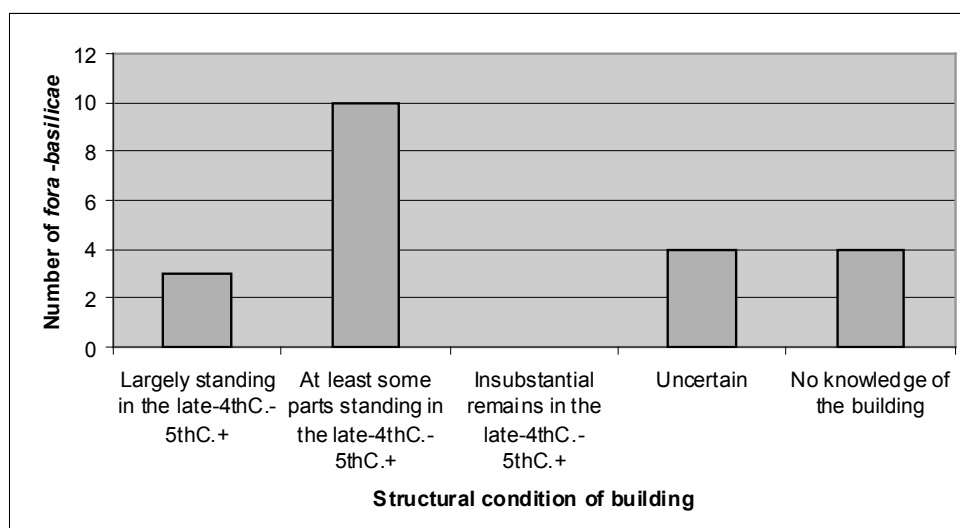


Figure 7.1 Graph showing the number of *forum-basilica* complexes from the twenty-one towns where at least part of the building remained standing into the later fourth century and beyond.

Figure 7.1 shows that out of the seventeen towns where something is known about the *forum-basilica* complex (**table 7.1**), thirteen have evidence for at least part of the buildings standing into the late fourth or early fifth centuries and later. There is insufficient evidence from the other four to make analysis possible. In some cases there is evidence for the deliberate demolition of some parts of the complex, perhaps due to structural decay and the expense of repairs, whilst other parts remained standing and in use. They would have remained central to the urban space and a focus in the road system. Although most eventually collapsed or were demolished by the early medieval period, the dating of this event for some is not easy to establish. A few examples will be discussed in a bit more detail, followed by a general discussion of other sites where the surviving evidence makes conclusions more problematic.

Town	Alterations	Date of demolition	References
Aldborough	Little known about the <i>forum-basilica</i> .	Uncertain	
Brough-on-Humber	Little known about the <i>forum-basilica</i> .	Uncertain	
Caerwent	Evidence for reconstructions and alterations in the late 3rdC. to early 4thC.	Very late 4thC. or early 5thC.	Brewer 1993: 63–4; Unpublished excavation

			report.
Caistor-by-Norwich	Rebuilt in the mid-3rdC. after a fire but little is known about later activity due to damage to the remains. 4thC. pottery might suggest that the building continued standing to this date.	Uncertain although there is evidence for 4thC. pottery on the site.	Frere 1971
Canterbury	Possible evidence for some rebuilding in the mid to late 4thC.	Uncertain but presence of later 4thC. pottery.	Frere and Bennett 1987: 93–8
Carmarthen	Nothing is known about a <i>forum-basilica</i> .	Uncertain	
Chelmsford	Nothing is known about a <i>forum-basilica</i> .	Uncertain	
Chichester	Little is known about the <i>forum-basilica</i> .	Uncertain	Down and Rule 1971: 3; Down 1988: 31
Cirencester	Alterations were evidenced in excavated areas with new walls constructed and new floors laid.	Continuing use into the 5thC. but uncertain about demolition.	Holbrook 1998: 117–9; Wachter 1964: 14
Colchester	Nothing is known about the <i>forum-basilica</i> .	Uncertain	
Dorchester	Little is known about the <i>forum-basilica</i> .	Uncertain	
Exeter	Alterations and extensions made in the mid-4thC.	Late 4thC. or early 5thC.	Bidwell 1979: 110
Gloucester	Removal of the paving stones of the <i>forum</i> in the 4thC. but there was a continuation of activity.	Uncertain but mid-4thC. pottery suggests a date of the later 4thC. or later.	Hurst 1972: 58
Leicester	Evidence for fire in the second half of the 4thC. but some evidence for the continuation of activity.	Uncertain but there is evidence for the robbing of walls in the post-Roman period.	Anon unpublished; Buckley 2000; Hebditch and Mellor 1973
Lincoln	Refloorings in the late 3rdC. to 4thC. and building work including the construction of a church in the <i>forum</i> in the 4thC.	Part at least may have remained standing as represented by the ‘Mint Wall’.	Gilmour and Jones 1980; M. Jones 1993: 16; M. Jones and Gilmour 1980: 68; Steane and Vince 1993: 72
London	Repairs were made to the building in the second half of the 3rdC.	Demolition in the late 3rdC. or early 4thC. although part of the structure may have remained standing.	Bateman 1998: 51; Brigham 1990; Perring 1991a: 113
Silchester	Few apparent changes made to the <i>basilica</i> after its construction in masonry in the mid-	Possible partial demolition in the 5thC. with the main shell	Fulford and Timby 2000: 78, 581

	2ndC. In the 5thC. there is evidence for the insertion of a hypocaust into the southern ambulatory of the west range and access to the west ambulatory was blocked off.	of the building remaining standing into the 6thC. and 7thC.	
Verulamium	Little evidence for alterations due to the area of excavations being too small but there is possible evidence for the continuation of use.	Uncertain due to the area of excavation being too small. There does not appear to be any evidence for deliberate demolition in the Roman period and the building may have remained standing to a later date.	Frere 1983: 57–8; Montagu-Puckle and Niblett 1987: 180; Niblett 2005a: 83
Winchester	Alterations in the north wing of the <i>forum</i> in the 4thC.	Uncertain due to the small area of the building uncovered by excavation. Parts may have remained standing into the post-Roman period.	Biddle 1964: 204; Biddle 1969: 315; Teague 1988: 6–8
Wroxeter	The building was destroyed by fire in the late 3rdC. but it may have continued in use afterwards.	Uncertain; parts may have remained standing into the post-Roman period.	Atkinson 1942: 106; R. White and Barker 1998: 112
York	Nothing is known about the <i>forum-basilica</i> .	Uncertain	Ottaway 1993: 87

Table 7.1 Details of the known date of the latest structural alterations and demolition of the *forum-basilica* complex in each town.

7.3.1 London

There have been a number of small-scale excavations on the site of the *basilica* and *forum* in London with the largest area being the Leadenhall Market site across the east end of the *basilica* (Diagram 36; G. Milne 1992). The results from this excavation suggested that this area of the *basilica*, at least, was demolished in the early fourth century and the stone cleared away. This was indicated by the fact that the surviving bases of the walls were at the same level as the early fourth century occupation layer in the area. The final floors were then

covered in silt, indicating a period of inactivity before the site was put to further use in the medieval period. Greater clarity regarding the sequence of demolition/destruction of the building is difficult because of truncation caused by later activity on the site (Brigham 1990: 77).

Excavations between 1995 and 2000 in the south-western corner of the *forum*, at 168 Fenchurch Street, seem to support the evidence for demolition around the early fourth century (Dunwoodie 2004: 34). The results from excavations on the site of the eastern portico at Whittington Avenue (Unpublished Museum of London Archaeology Service archive XIV88) and 20–21 Lime Street (Unpublished Museum of London Archaeology Service archive LIE90) indicate that the portico was probably demolished before the main building, perhaps in the late third century.

There are indications, however, that not all parts of the *forum-basilica* were demolished at this time (Bateman 1998: 51) demonstrating a complexity in the late and post-Roman use of the structure and its survival. At the extreme eastern end of the *basilica*, the survival of walls and tiled and tessellated floors of the eastern antechamber, the apse, indicate that this part remained standing to a later date, possibly even remaining above ground into the fifteenth century when the Leadenhall was built (Brigham 1990: 77; G. Milne 1992: 29–33). Observations of the area in the early 1880s, during the construction work of the Leadenhall Market, identified surviving Roman architecture ‘showing the great extent of Roman building, and the thickness of walling’ (Brock 1881: 90; see also Lambert 1916: 225–6), which contrasts with the evidence from the later excavations. Other areas where walls survived include parts of the south wall of the Nave and some rooms off the Nave (Brigham 1990: 77). These indicate survival to a post-Roman date, but too little is known to comment on the extent of this survival.

It is inferred from this analysis that parts of the complex survived, including the area of the apse, and remained in use beyond the fourth century, whilst other parts were demolished. Only further excavation will reveal more details and the extent of activity here. This

demonstrates the difficulties of determining destruction dates of buildings: it should not be assumed that evidence for demolition from one excavation can necessarily be applied to the whole building.

7.3.2 Cirencester

Excavations on the site of the *forum-basilica* at Cirencester have also revealed a complex sequence of activity. The published excavations of the site suggested that the *basilica* was demolished in the late fourth or early fifth century (Holbrook 1998: 111). Pits that cut into the *basilica* floor contained Oxfordshire colour-coated ware of AD 325–400. One pit contained a coin of Honorius (AD 395–402). These pits were sealed by the demolition debris of the building – consisting of masonry, mortar and roofing slates – which itself was not dated. This means that the building could well have remained standing later than the dating evidence gained from the pits. This is supported by the evidence from the *forum* (Diagram 30) where there were some major alterations to the structure in the mid- to later fourth century, including the enclosure of the colonnade of the portico, the rendering of walls with pink plaster and the laying down of new mosaics (*ibid.*: 116).¹³² Mosaics were also laid in the northwest range of the *forum*, although the dating is more problematic since the excavation did not continue to earlier layers beneath the mosaic.

It is possible that the *basilica* remained standing alongside the *forum* but if it had been demolished at an earlier date, then the *forum* would have become an independent structure. Wacher (1995: 314) has suggested that these alterations to the *forum-basilica* may have been for the creation of an administrative palace for the new province of *Britannia Prima*. This administrative change is not known to have happened until around AD 314 (Holbrook 1998: 116) which is too early for these changes. The unusual nature of the building also has no parallels from known palaces (Lavan 1999). More work is required on the building, but what is clear is that a large part, if not all, remained standing and in use to a late date.

¹³² The new mosaics were placed over a make-up of stone, loam and plaster where a coin of Constantine II provides a *terminus post quem* of AD 335.

7.3.3 Silchester

Excavations at Silchester concentrated on the site of the *basilica* and there is only very limited information for the *forum* (Diagram 42). The main *basilica* hall was uncovered in excavations between 1980 and 1986 but was also investigated in the Victorian period (G. Fox and St. John Hope 1893) which destroyed much of the stratigraphy within the building (Fulford and Timby 2000: 80). From the excavated data it seems that there was an early phase of demolition in the later fourth century, when some of the interior walls and the colonnade of the building were removed to ground level. A coin of AD 360–8 was found within a pit cut into the foundations of the colonnade at the north end where a stylobate block had been removed, but the foundation left. It provided a *terminus post quem* for the robbing of this wall (*ibid.*: 79–80). The main walls of the *basilica*, however, were robbed to their foundations at a later date, in the sixth or seventh century or possibly even later (*ibid.*), indicating that the main frame of the building remained standing and in use.

Apparently contemporary with the first phase of robbing, was the insertion of a hypocaust under the floor in the west range of the *basilica*. It was only partially excavated and there is little dating evidence, although it appears to have cut a layer containing fourth century pottery (*ibid.*: 75). Not only were these rooms still maintained and used in the west wing but at least one was now heated. In this area was also a sherd of engraved glass dating to the late fourth or fifth century, though unstratified, and a piece of window glass of the seventh to ninth centuries (*ibid.*: 76–8) which might give a date to which activity continued. Late use is also indicated by a sherd of engraved glass vessel dating to the late Roman or early post-Roman periods (Price 2000: 320–1).¹³³ Very little of the *forum* has been excavated, although late

¹³³ Whilst there were ninety fragments of cast matt-glossy window glass that was in use to around AD 300, there were also ten fragments of pale green, cylinder-blown double-glossy window glass which was in use from the beginning of the fourth century (Allen 2000: 314). There were also nine fragments of dark greyish blue-green, cylinder blown window glass likely to belong to post-Roman use of the building, which is especially well known at Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical sites (*ibid.*). These later fragments may represent replacements to the windows of the *basilica* indicating the hall remained in use and in a state of good repair possibly into the seventh or eighth century (Fulford and Timby 2000: 581).

layers, one containing a coin of Eugenius (AD 392–5) completely covering a statue base within the *forum* (Fulford and Timby 2000: 75), suggest that the area remained in use alongside the *basilica*. This evidence also suggests that statue(s) had been removed from the *forum* at an earlier date.

7.3.4 Wroxeter

Like Silchester, Wroxeter's *forum* (Diagram 44) produced layers indicating use into the late fourth century and beyond (Atkinson 1942). Unfortunately, the complex was not excavated to what would be considered modern standards so some caution is required when examining evidence from these later layers.¹³⁴ The *basilica* hall survived poorly and was only partially excavated but the western and southern range survived better. Within these ranges, Atkinson identified some traces of late use including new walls, the alteration of rooms and the laying of new floors (*ibid.*: 108–9). There was little dating evidence although unstratified coins above one new floor included one of Victorinus (AD 268–70/1) and two of Tetricus I (AD 270/1–73/4), emperors of the Gallic Empire. Despite the limited evidence, it is possible that at least the east wing of the building remained in use.

7.3.5 Other towns

Further towns will be listed in brief because there is little available material. At Exeter, only a small corner of the complex was excavated (Diagram 33) but it is evident that structural changes were being made up to around the mid-fourth century, which included the extension of the *basilica* (Bidwell 1979: 104–5). The excavated area suggests demolition in the early fifth century, the only dating evidence, provided by burials across the southwest of the nave wall (*ibid.*: 108–10), giving a *terminus ante quem* of around AD 450. These burials need not indicate the demolition of the whole building, other parts of which may have remained standing. Only further excavation will determine this. The burials may even indicate a continued focus of activity here (see section 10.4 on burials).

¹³⁴ There is also no archive surviving for these excavations and so the evidence and interpretations in the report cannot now be checked easily. Knowledge of the site would benefit greatly from re-excavation.

At Verulamium, the *forum-basilica* has only received limited excavation ([Diagram 43](#); Corder 1940; Montagu-Puckle and Niblett 1987) but there were traces of rebuilding and alteration in the third and fourth centuries, and later fourth century pottery suggested use at least to the end of the fourth and into the fifth century (Montagu-Puckle and Niblett 1987). The level of accumulated material within the structure might indicate that demolition did not occur until the post-Roman period (Frere 1983: 57–8; Niblett 2005a: 83).

At Caerwent, the small area of the nave and rear-range of the *basilica* that was re-excavated in the late 1980s provided some more information on the sequence of the structure (Brewer 1990: 81; unpublished excavation report; [Diagram 23](#)). It would seem that demolition, dated by coins, took place in the late fourth or early fifth century. Other parts, however, would certainly appear to have been standing until a later date with some walls even being incorporated into nineteenth century farm buildings (Brewer 1993: 61). Like London this evidence indicates a complexity of use into the post-Roman period with some parts remaining standing whilst others were demolished.

Very little is known about the *forum-basilica* at Canterbury with only a very small area being uncovered through excavation, but a section of exposed wall did seem to show evidence for rebuilding in the mid- to late fourth century (Frere and Bennett 1987: 93–8). At Lincoln, the survival of the ‘Mint Wall’, a section of the *basilica* wall 22.5m long and 7.25m high (Gilmour and Jones 1980; M. Jones 1993: 16), indicates that at least part of the *basilica* remained standing into the post-Roman period and beyond, whilst the excavations of the east range of the *forum* (Steane 2006) have demonstrated that this part also remained standing ([Diagram 37](#)). The small area excavated of the *forum-basilica* at Winchester (Teague 1988) points to alterations in the fourth century. At Leicester, whilst the site suffers from much disturbance and truncation, there is evidence for structural alterations and new floors within the building after a fire in the second half of the fourth century (Hebditch and Mellor 1973).

7.3.6 Discussion

Where there is evidence available, then, there does seem to have been structural continuation of at least part of the building to a late date, often into the post-Roman period. This evidence may well also be representative of more evidence that has not survived in the archaeological record, perhaps including timber structural components (see chapter 9). Structural alterations to the buildings could be seen as demonstrating the decline of the building as originally constructed; but equally they indicate that the buildings continued to be foci of attention and centres of activities within the towns.

7.4 Public bath buildings

Public baths could be monumental buildings covering large areas of the town. The largest buildings, especially the Imperial Baths, had many functions additional to bathing.¹³⁵ It has been argued that it was the Imperial Baths (*thermae*) that played an important part in making baths more popular and respected within towns since during the Republic baths were smaller, less organised and not always considered socially respectable (J. Carter 1989: 44; DeLaine 1999a: 70); they also generally only had a bathing function at this time (Nielson 1999: 35).¹³⁶ The Imperial baths, with their facilities, marble plaques, statues and paintings (Gros 1996: 397), promoted the role of public baths as important social places and foci for display and propaganda. In the large towns of the Empire, however, public baths were often outnumbered by commercial baths and it is these that are likely to have fulfilled the basic bathing needs of the population (DeLaine 1999a: 72), leaving the public baths as centres of social activity.

They were important places of social interaction (DeLaine 1999b: 7–9; Yegül 1992: 1–4). Vitruvius states, for instance, that the baths should be placed directly under light so that ‘the

¹³⁵ The Baths of Trajan, built during the first decade of the second century, for example, contained exercise halls and also accommodated meetings, lectures and performances (J. Anderson 1997: 275) whilst the Baths of Caracalla built in Rome in the AD 210s had gardens, fountains and a running track (Thorpe 1995: 59–60).

¹³⁶ In the *Epistulae* (LXXXVI), Seneca, writing in the first century AD, contrasts the small and dark bathhouse which Scipio Africanus had in his house at Liternum in the second century BC with the extravagant baths of his day (Thorpe 1995: 57).

bystanders do not obscure the light with their shadows' (V.10.4), clearly indicating the presence of many people who were not bathing. In some parts of the Empire there is evidence for the continued importance of bath buildings in the late Roman period and they even influenced the architecture of other types of building. The *Basilica Nova*, built in Rome in the early fourth century, for example, took the form of the *frigidarium* (the hall for the cold baths) of a bathhouse rather than drawing on the architectural tradition of *basilicae* (Thorpe 1995: 47). Bathhouses were often associated with religious sanctuaries indicating that they were also part of religious ceremony. In Britain examples include at Verulamium when in the centre of the town there was an early complex of monumental buildings including a temple, bathhouse and theatre (Niblett 2005a: 105). Other sites include Bath (Cunliffe and Davenport 1985) and sanctuaries such as Lydney (A. Woodward 1992: 49, 77).

Documentary evidence demonstrates that baths took on some important roles in late Roman times: in AD 245 in Antioch, for example, the governor Julius Priscus held his judicial meetings within the baths of Hadrian rather than the *basilica*. Surviving written sources state that the Emperor Valerian (AD 253–60) used the public baths as his headquarters (*SHA Aurel.* X.3, XIII.1; Thébert 2003: 445).¹³⁷ Later there are records that the AD 411 council of Catholic Bishops took place within the baths of Gargilius in Carthage (*ibid.*: 445), the *Secretarium Thymarum Gargiliarum*.¹³⁸ The changing official use of baths is occasionally reflected in archaeological evidence, as when marble statues of the imperial family were transferred to the bathhouse at Thubursicum Bure in Tunisia (DeLaine 1999a: 72; Thébert

¹³⁷ Passages in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* include: 'At this time...Ulpian Crinitus gave thanks formally to Valerian as he sat in the public baths at Byzantium saying that he had done him great honour in giving him Aurelian as deputy. And for this reason he determined to adopt Aurelian' (*Aurel.* X.3). Another is: 'when Valerian Augustus had taken his seat in the public baths at Byzantium, in the presence of the army and in the presence of the officials of the Palace,...(he) spoke as follows: The commonwealth thanks you, Aurelian, for having set it free from the power of the Goths' (*Aurel.* XIII.1).

¹³⁸ The function or nature of the *secretarium* is not known, but it may have been where laws were drawn up (Leone 2007: 86) and apparently it had moved into the baths.

2003: 413).¹³⁹ Bath buildings often remained important places in the late Roman period, which has implications for examining the surviving evidence from bathhouses in Britain.

Within the towns of Roman Britain, bathhouses have been identified in all the towns except Cirencester, Colchester and Gloucester. It is often true, however, that the excavated area of the building was small, as at Canterbury (K. Blockley *et al.* 1995) and Verulamium (Niblett 2001: 65, 77). In other cases, the excavations were of an early date and little material survives in the archives, as at Caerwent (Nash-Williams 1930), Silchester (Boon 1957: 101), Leicester (Kenyon 1948) and Lincoln (Petch unpublished). Remains of a bathhouse were uncovered in York in 1839 but details are scant (Ottaway 1993: 87). Some towns, such as Canterbury and London, have multiple bathhouses and it is unlikely that all were public buildings (K. Blockley *et al.* 1995; Frere and Stow 1983; Rowsome 1999). A number of examples of bathhouses have also been found in ‘small towns’, such as Godmanchester (H. Green 1975: 198–206), Braughing (Partridge 1978: 25–31) and Towcester (Burnham and Wachter 1990), but it is unclear whether these were public structures.

The more definite function of bathhouses is useful because it makes change of use more readily identifiable and this provides a pattern of comparison for changes of use in other public buildings.¹⁴⁰ Figure 7.2 shows that in the main twenty-one towns under study, twelve bathhouses are likely to have been at least partly standing into the later fourth or early fifth centuries. Two appear to have been derelict by the fourth century and it is uncertain whether any part of these remained standing to a later date. At six of the towns, no public bathhouses are so far known whilst at a further two, there is insufficient knowledge of the bath buildings

¹³⁹ At Thubursicum Bure, between AD 260–268, the baths were given the name of the Emperor and saw considerable aggrandisement. Marble statues of the imperial family were transferred to the building (Thébert 2003: 413) indicating that this was now an important location for propaganda and may have been where meetings and even administration took place. In Liternum, Campania, in 383 an inscription records how the governor moved statues ‘from a hidden place in the town to the thronged Severan baths’ (CIL, X no. 3714) whilst at Beneventum a curator *rei publicae* of the late third or early fourth century (CIL, IX no. 1588) brought a statue ‘from a hidden place to the use and splendour of the baths’ (Yegül 1992: 322).

¹⁴⁰ This book will not consider the structures thought to have been private bath buildings.

for there to be information on their condition in the late Roman period (table 7.2). The end date of the use of the bathhouses as functioning baths is often difficult to identify since they may have operated in a reduced fashion. The bathhouses identified at Canterbury, Dorchester and Chichester, show definite evidence for changes or additions to the structures in the fourth century, demonstrating that these buildings were still functioning in some capacity. For other bathhouses, only a *terminus post quem* for their destruction or change of use can be identified. In many cases the function as a bathhouse probably ceased earlier than the use of the buildings themselves, which were then utilised for other activities.

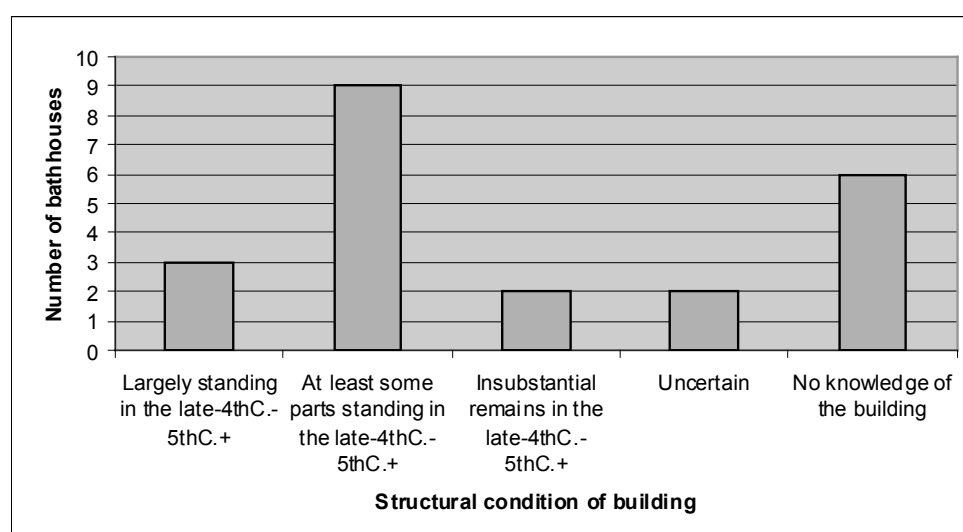


Figure 7.2 Graph showing the number of public bath buildings from the twenty-one towns where at least part of the building remained standing into the later fourth century and beyond.

Town	Alterations	Date of Demolition	References
Aldborough	Nothing known of the bathhouses.	Uncertain	
Brough-on-Humber	Nothing known of the bathhouses.	Uncertain	
Caerwent	The later 3rdC. saw the addition of a new wing to the baths and in the 4thC. a timber building was inserted into the ruins of the colonnade of the	Uncertain: part of the building at least may have remained standing into the 5thC.	Nash-Williams 1930

	building.		
Caistor-by-Norwich	Rebuilt in the late 2ndC. after a fire but little is known about its later phases due to damage on the site.	Uncertain	Frere 1971
Canterbury	St. Margaret's Street: alteration in the early 4thC. with rebuilding and the construction of a <i>laconicum</i> .	Uncertain but the structure seems to have remained standing into the 5thC.	K. Blockley <i>et al.</i> 1995: 188–91
Carmarthen	Little known about the bathhouse but the finds suggest a continuation of use into the 3rdC.	Uncertain but in use into the 3rdC.	H. James 2003: 9, 20; W. Morris 1962
Chelmsford	Nothing known of the bathhouses.	Uncertain	
Chichester	Evidence for the repair of pumping equipment into the late 4thC.	No evidence for demolition available.	Down 1988: 42
Cirencester	Nothing is known about the bathhouses.	Uncertain	
Colchester	Nothing is known about the bathhouses.	Uncertain	
Dorchester	Finds suggest that the building continued in use to the end of the 4thC. or later but little else is known about it.	Uncertain of demolition date but coins and pottery into the 5thC.	Keen 1977; J. Magilton pers. comm.; Putnam 2007: 70–1
Exeter	The <i>natatio</i> and drain were filled in during the late 3rdC. but the main building may have continued in use.	Uncertain	Bidwell 1979: 122
Gloucester	Nothing is known about the bathhouses.	Uncertain	
Leicester	No later levels within the baths survived but in the courtyard a succession of floors suggests the continued use of the building into the 4thC.	The survival of the 'Jewry Wall' suggests that at least part of the building remained standing.	Kenyon 1948: 7
Lincoln	Repairs or rebuildings probably took place in the Antonine period but little is known beyond that date.	Uncertain but activity does not seem to have continued beyond around AD 350.	M. Jones 2003b: 127
London	Huggin Hill baths: after the early demolition new buildings were constructed on the site.	Careful demolition took place in the mid-2ndC. although part of the building may have remained standing into the medieval period.	Marsden 1976: 23
Silchester	Use continued into the 4thC.	Part of the south <i>caldarium</i> had probably been pulled down by	Boon 1974

		the 4thC. but uncertain about the rest of the building.	
Verulamium	The <i>insula</i> III bathhouse may have been derelict by the late 3rdC.	Demolition in the late 3rdC. But there remains a possibility that it was rebuilt in the 4thC.	Niblett 2005a: 85–6
	The Branch Road bathhouse had fallen into decay by the mid-3rdC. and silt accumulated in the hypocausts.	The building may have naturally decayed after abandonment.	Niblett 2005a: 83–5; D. Wilson 1975: 258
Winchester	Little is known about the bath building although there was possible use into the early 4thC.	Demolition sometime in the 4thC.	Winchester Museums Service SQ 88
Wroxeter	A number of structural alterations in the 3rdC. and into the 4thC. The <i>frigidarium</i> may have remained standing and in use with a different function.	The ‘Old Work’ suggests the survival of at least the <i>frigidarium</i> beyond the 4thC. whilst other parts of the baths may also have stood to a late date.	Ellis 2000: 55
York	Little is known about the baths.	Uncertain	Ottaway 1993: 87; RCHME 1962: 54–5

Table 7.2 Details of the known date of the latest structural alterations and demolition of the public bath buildings in each town.

7.4.1 Leicester

The bathhouse at Leicester was excavated in the 1940s but no later levels within the baths themselves survived, or were recognised. There was, however, a series of late layers within the courtyard containing fourth century pottery and coins (Kenyon 1948: 34) which might relate to the continued use of the building even if the function had changed. That at least a section of the baths remained standing into the late Roman period and beyond is indicated by the survival of the ‘Jewry Wall’ which was part of the unheated rooms of the baths. This was incorporated into a later church on the site (*ibid.*: 7) and still stands next to a church today.

Although there is no direct evidence, this part of the baths may have functioned as a church or an administrative or judicial building in the late Roman period, especially since it later became the site of a medieval church. It is uncertain for how long other parts of the bathhouse remained standing with this wall and whether there were selective stages of demolition.

7.4.2 *London*

Excavations of the Huggin Hill baths in London ([Diagram 38](#)) have shown that at least the excavated areas had gone out of use by the mid-second century. This has sometimes been taken to indicate an early decline of the town despite the fact that there are likely to have been many other bathhouses (Marsden 1976: 20; Rowsome 1999: 269–70).¹⁴¹ Despite the early demolition of some areas of the Huggin Hill baths, there is evidence that at least some of the walls remained standing throughout the Roman period and into the early medieval period. A document of the ninth century records large standing masonry referred to as the Hwaetmundes stan in the area of the baths (T. Dyson 1978: 209). If this is connected with the baths, it would indicate that parts of the building survived to the end of the Roman period and beyond, although their function in the late Roman and post-Roman periods is unclear.¹⁴² The excavations carried out by Marsden (1976) in the 1960s, and the later excavations in the 1980s (Unpublished Museum of London Archaeology Service archive DMT88), were not extensive enough to preclude the possibility of the continued existence of some walls to a late date.

7.4.3 *Wroxeter*

¹⁴¹ One example recently found was at 172–6 The Highway, the site of the ‘Babe Ruth’ diner. It would have lain outside the walls of the Roman town and was in use from the second to the early fifth century (Unpublished Museum of London Archaeology Service archive HGA02).

¹⁴² A land grant from Queenhithe of AD 889 refers to a market courtyard as an ancient stone building called Hwaetmundes stan. T. Dyson (1978: 209) has placed the area mentioned in this grant to the location of the Huggin Hill baths although there is no definite proof that the structure mentioned was that of the baths. Further excavation of the baths might be able to show that some parts remained standing beyond the demolition of others. It does, however, indicate that care must be taken in assuming that evidence for a demolished area represents the demolition of the whole building.

Like the ‘Jewry Wall’ in Leicester and the Hwaetmundes stan in London, the ‘Old Work’ at Wroxeter indicates that at least part of the public bath building remained standing and probably in use, although not necessarily for its original purpose, into the late and post-Roman period ([Diagrams 45](#)). Excavations have shown that the ‘Old Work’ formed part of the *frigidarium* which appears to have survived well beyond the collapse or demolition of other parts of the building (P. Barker *et al.* 1997: 138). Its survival, combined with its east-west orientation and evidence for a vaulted roof and late burials in the surrounding hypocausts, has led to the suggestion that it functioned as a church in the late Roman or early post-Roman periods (R. White and Barker 1998: 125). There are many other functions that the building could have performed including a meeting place of some other kind or a granary (*ibid.*). The structure would definitely appear to have been valued and in use in the fifth century and later, a theory supported by the fact that it was surrounded by numerous newly built timber structures at this time (P. Barker *et al.* 1997: 138–68).

7.4.4 Other bathhouses

At the Canterbury St. Margaret’s Street bathhouse ([Diagram 25](#)) the excavation of part of the building showed clear alterations to its structure in the early part of the fourth century. The infilling of the *piscina* with rubble was identified, along with the construction of a *laconicum* over the site, but by *c.* AD 350 this too was being put to another function (K. Blockley *et al.* 1995: 171, 188). The building was not demolished, raising the probability that much of it continued to have some kind of function. At Chichester, dendrochronology of surviving oak timbers lining the cistern (main well) of the bathhouse indicates that it was still being used and repaired in the late fourth century (Down 1988: 42).¹⁴³ There also appeared to be no evidence for abandonment, suggesting that the building remained standing to at least the end of the Roman period (Down 1978: 152), although there had been much post-Roman robbing of the latest layers.

¹⁴³ From the cistern water which would have been pumped into a tank, reaching the bathhouse through lead pipes (Down 1988: 42).

Late activity at the baths in Dorchester is indicated by the insertion of a hot tub in the late fourth century but the overall size of the baths contracted (Keen 1977; J. Magilton pers. comm.).¹⁴⁴ Robbing of the plumbing and some structural features including tiles seems to have taken place in the early fifth century (*ibid.*) but there is nothing to indicate that the shell of the building was not standing and in use to a later date, which is likely to be the case (Putnam 2007: 70–1). Similarly, at Exeter, although the *natatio* (open pool) and an excavated section of drain seem to have been in-filled in the late third century, there is no evidence that the main building had gone out of use. It can be inferred that it continued into the fourth century and later (Bidwell 1979: 122; Unpublished Exeter Urban Archaeology Database record 10257).

The baths at Caerwent were not excavated to modern standards. However, coins of Constantius II (AD 337–61), Valens (AD 364–78) and Arcadius (AD 394–408), from the excavations, may suggest some kind of use of the structure at this time. Other baths where nothing is known about the later layers due to the nature of the excavations or the disturbance of the stratigraphy include the buildings at Lincoln (Petch unpublished), Caistor-by-Norwich (Frere 1971) and Verulamium (Niblett 2005a: 85–6). Without positive evidence for the demolition of the whole of these structures, however, it is likely that parts of them remained standing and in some kind of use to the end of the Roman period or beyond.

7.4.5 Discussion

Bathhouses are often perceived to be one of the public buildings types that would have been most desirable to maintain to a late date, at the expense of other buildings, because they were the most valued within the town (Liebeschuetz 2000: 39; R. White and Barker 1998: 88; Yegül 1992: 321). Evidence for early cases of demolition or abandonment, therefore, is taken as a clear marker of decline. In the western Empire, the end of the use of bathhouses seems to have occurred earlier than in the East where some continued into the eighth century although on a reduced scale (Liebeschuetz 2000: 180; Yegül 1992: 315, 324–6). In Britain, the latest

¹⁴⁴ The excavations are in the process of being written-up for publication (J. Magilton pers. comm.).

bathhouses seem to have lasted only until the early fifth century and this fact is used to indicate an early decline of towns here. The rise of Christianity is sometimes given as a reason for the end of public baths since they were considered to be related to rituals of pagan religion with amoral connotations (Yegül 1992: 315). There is good evidence from parts of the Empire that baths, perhaps because of their compatible architecture and water-supply, were converted into churches, as in the case of the baths of Novatianus in Rome around AD 400 (Hansen 2003: 146; Thorpe 1995: 81).¹⁴⁵

Viewing the disuse of the structures as baths as a symbol of decline may be simplistic, especially since in the later Roman period there appears to have been a preference across the Empire for small private bathhouses rather than public buildings (Liebeschuetz 2000: 30; Stirling 2001). Secondary uses must also be taken into account when looking for the ‘end’ date of the buildings. There are some examples where parts of the bathhouses were used for different purposes whilst parts retained their original function.¹⁴⁶ Like the *forum-basilica*, the bathhouses were often hugely monumental structures and, as the ‘Old Work’ at Wroxeter indicates, in many cases, remains survived into the late Roman period and sometimes beyond.

7.5 Spectacle buildings

The function of spectacle buildings in Romano-British towns is not straightforward. It is unclear to what extent the theatres and amphitheatres in Britain were used for the same purposes as they were in other parts of the Empire and their function across the Empire was hugely varied.

The archaeological record indicates that theatres were not used simply for classical theatrical performances. Across the Empire many were associated with temples (Grimal 1983: 57),

¹⁴⁵ There is also known epigraphic evidence, although now lost, dated to AD 384 documenting that the bath building already had a congregation and clergy in its unmodified state (Webb 2000: 65) indicating that it was converted to a church before alterations to its structure. This might provide analogy for other bath buildings, and public buildings more generally, where textual evidence is lacking. There is also the issue of ownership in these cases where public buildings were taken over by the Church.

¹⁴⁶ At Leptiminus in North Africa, for example, one area of the bathhouse had a pottery kiln installed whilst the baths remained in use (Stirling 2001).

including all the known examples of theatres in Romano-British towns. In Pompeii, for example, the theatre complex, including both a large theatre and a smaller covered theatre, was surrounded by temples including the Temple of Hercules, the Temple of Zeus Meilichios and the Temple of Isis which lay directly behind it and was surrounded by high walls (Potter 1987: 187). In Gaul they have been identified as part of rural sanctuaries as well as in urban contexts. Examples include Sanxay (Aupert 1992; Horne and King 1980: 466–7) and Vendeuve (Horne and King 1980: 486) both in Vienne, Vendeuil-Caply located at the source of the River Noye (*ibid.*: 485; Wightman 1985: 98) and Ribemont-sur-Ancre (Brunaux 1999). Besides being spaces endowed with the divine presence, theatres were places of social interaction in which all members of society could view each other in one location (Gebhard 1996: 127; Häussler 1999: 8). Zanker (2000: 37–8) has considered theatres in terms of the way in which they reinforced the social order through their design, since different sections of society sat in different areas and physical contact between groups was minimised by the stipulation that ‘many and spacious stepped passages must be arranged between the seats’ to allow multiple routes of access (Vitr. *De arch.* V.3.5). Without textual evidence, it is not possible to know whether a comparable organisation of seating existed in the theatres in Britain, but it raises possibilities about their role in Romano-British towns.

Amphitheatres have been considered in a similar way: Edmondson (1996), states that through encouraging different types of people to sit in close proximity, the amphitheatres represented microcosms of society. The presentations and displays within the amphitheatre were tools for ensuring social cohesion and enforcing the Roman social structure. Like theatres, amphitheatres probably had a religious role, being convenient centres for congregation. Bomgardner (1991: 289) has highlighted the problematic lack of excavation of the land surrounding amphitheatres in Britain since in most cases there would have been associated structures, including temples and service buildings, which would assist in understanding the use of the amphitheatres. A temple has been identified by aerial photography close to the amphitheatre at Caistor-by-Norwich (Wacher 1995: 250). Amphitheatres are sometimes

found at religious sanctuaries in France and Britain, such as Frilford in Oxfordshire (Hingley 1985: 205–6; Lock *et al.* 2002: 70–3; 2003: 89).¹⁴⁷ This amphitheatre appears to have been deliberately constructed in a boggy part of the settlement and a large number of bronze, iron and glass objects found in this area just outside the amphitheatre may be related to ritual deposition (G. Lock pers. comm.). This evidence and the location of the building may indicate that, at least on occasion, this structure was used for religious activity.

Though there have been a number of excavations in Britain, amphitheatres have produced few finds such as large animal bones, weapons and human bone,¹⁴⁸ that one might expect would be present after being used for Roman entertainments. In fact at some there have been no finds indicating that they were used in ways distinct from theatres. Excavations at the amphitheatre at London produced samian ware with scenes of gladiatorial combat (Bateman 2000), which may support the idea that some kind of spectacles took place here; the distal humerus of a brown bear from behind the arena wall may also support this (Bateman 1997: 56) and possible chambers used to keep animals have been identified at London and Cirencester (Bateman 1997: 56; Holbrook 1998: 173). A number of sherds of samian ware displaying gladiatorial combat has also come from the amphitheatre at Chester (Mason 2001: 142–6). It was also near the amphitheatre here that a fragment of a slate relief depicting a gladiatorial scene was found in the eighteenth century (*ibid.*: 146–7) whilst excavations of a part of the structure in 2004–5 located human bones and large stone blocks possibly where animals or humans could have been chained during spectacles (Wilmott *et al.* 2006: 12). The recently

¹⁴⁷ The exact function and nature of the Frilford structure has seen much debate and may indicate a need to move beyond categories that are too strict. The structure may have been a ‘theatre-amphitheatre’ as found in Gaul (L. Smith 2006) or it may have been a type of structure that so far has no parallels.

¹⁴⁸ Excavations in the Colosseum in Rome in the nineteenth century by the archaeologist Lanciani are purported to have found numbers of pits containing animal carcasses (Thorpe 1995: 55) and classical sources, art work and depictions on decorated samian ware reveal images of gladiatorial combat. Fulford (1989: 187–9) has suggested that the high number of horse bones from the Silchester amphitheatre may reflect equestrian spectacles that took place, although he admits that it seems equally possible these may have been dumped there from outside. Another possibility might be that the horses had been used to feed large carnivores that were used in the games. If this was the case, then they could be used to indicate games taking place within the amphitheatre.

discovered circus outside Colchester also indicates Roman entertainments (P. Crummy 2005; 2008). Gladiatorial combat and fights involving wild animals are likely to have taken place within amphitheatres in Britain, especially where there would have been many people from overseas such as in London (Bateman 2000). These events could also have been combined with religious activities of both Roman and indigenous character; in some cases taking on some of the roles connected with the meaning-laden places of the late pre-Roman period.

In Britain, Cirencester is the only town where both an amphitheatre and the remains of a possible theatre have been identified (Holbrook 1998: 142–5). Where only one of these occurs, an amphitheatre is usually represented although at Canterbury, Verulamium and extramural Colchester only theatres are known so far. Remains interpreted as a theatre-type structure were uncovered in early twentieth century excavations at Wroxeter, west of the temple in the southern half of the town. The remains seemed to indicate a large rectangular enclosure with double walls and rounded corners, with an alcove set in one wall and an entrance in another. It was argued that the double walls supported seating and that this structure may have been a focus for rituals and performances associated with the temple (Bushe-Fox 1916: 20–2; G. Webster 1975: 58; R. White and Barker 1998: 95). Details of this building are scant and further evaluation of the excavations is not now possible.

Most British amphitheatres are extramural, in common with many others across the Empire, which may relate to logistical considerations of access. Exceptions are the amphitheatre at London and the problematic example at Caerwent where excavations in the early twentieth century uncovered a structure consisting of a single wall enclosing an elliptical-shaped area (Ashby *et al.* 1904: 104–5), but the definite nature of this structure is uncertain. The setting of the amphitheatre at Dorchester within the Neolithic henge monument of Maumbury Rings, an enclosure of around 2100m², meant that it had the largest arena in Britain. There is no evidence for the use of the henge in later prehistory, although Roman construction activity may have destroyed earlier strata. It is possible that in some way the amphitheatre at Dorchester commemorated and transformed pre-existing forms of use of the monument. The

location of the amphitheatre at Chester may also be significant despite its being built on what appears to have been a new site; it was situated at the edge of the plateau overlooking the River Dee, a name which comes from Deva the goddess (Mason 2001: 106). This amphitheatre, which could have been used for religious activity as well as games and other events, may have been drawing on the religious significance of the place.

Both types of spectacle building require further detailed study in Britain (Bomgardner 1993: 379), and this could determine whether both indigenous and Roman-inspired activities took place within them, and the extent to which they remained vital places in the late Roman period. In many cases in Britain, the amphitheatres and theatres remained standing into the late Roman period and beyond, continuing as monuments in the landscape, and there is often evidence for some kind of activity within them. **Figure 7.3 and table 7.3** show that seven of the known structures were standing into the later fourth and fifth centuries, whilst the circumstances surrounding a further seven examples are uncertain. Only one building appears to have been demolished at an earlier date. The fact that many of these structures survived as visible earthworks into the twenty-first century indicates that they will have continued to impact on people within these landscapes. They remained important structures regardless of whether they continued to be used as spectacle buildings.

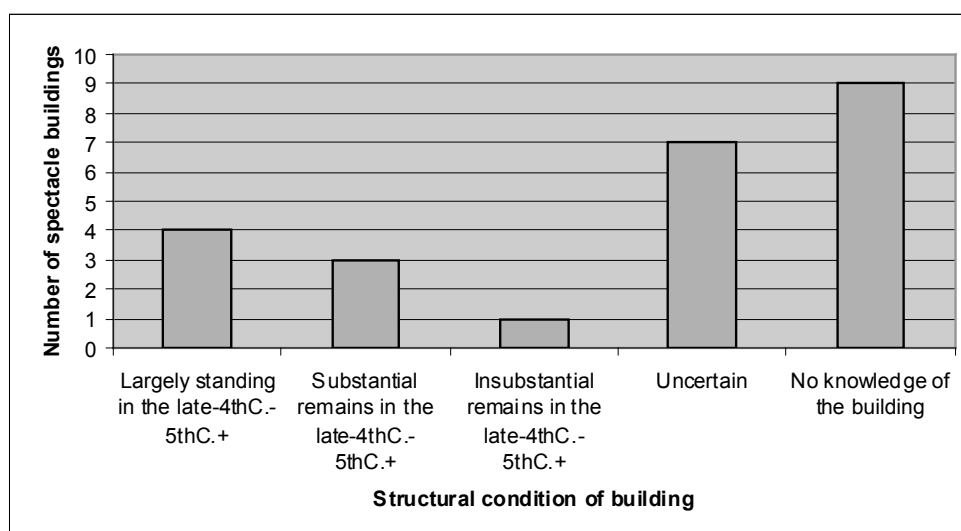


Figure 7.3 Graph showing the number of spectacle buildings from the twenty-one towns where at least part of the building remained standing into the later fourth century and beyond.

Town	Alterations	Date of Demolition	References
Aldborough	No amphitheatre or theatre known.	Uncertain	
Brough-on-Humber	No amphitheatre or theatre known.	Uncertain	
Caerwent	Possible evidence for an amphitheatre but the known traces are problematic.	Uncertain	Ashby <i>et al.</i> 1904: 104–5; Wachter 1995: 388
Caistor-by-Norwich	Amphitheatre known through aerial photography but unexcavated.	Uncertain	Maxwell and Wilson 1987: 42
Canterbury	The theatre was rebuilt in the early 3rdC. but it is uncertain if it was still in use in the 4thC.	The structure remained standing into the medieval period but had been demolished or robbed by AD 1200.	P. Bennett pers. comm.; Frere 1970
Carmarthen	Amphitheatre known but little has been excavated.	Uncertain	H. James 2003: 18–9; Wachter 1995: 392–3
Chelmsford	No amphitheatre or theatre known.	Uncertain	
Chichester	Very limited information known about the amphitheatre.	Uncertain but has remained a visible earthwork into the 21stC.	G. White 1936: 157–8
Cirencester	Amphitheatre: alterations to the northeast entrance and the interior during the 5thC.	Uncertain but remained standing into the 5thC. and a visible earthwork into the 21stC.	Holbrook 1998: 169–71; unpublished site record book CIR 62 N
	Theatre: very little known about the structure and its interpretation is problematic.	Uncertain	Holbrook 1998: 142–5
Colchester	Theatre in <i>insula</i> XIII but little is known about its later history.	Uncertain but no material dated to the 4thC. in the excavations.	P. Crummy 1982
	Gosbecks theatre rebuilt in stone in the mid-2ndC. but demolition in the 3rdC.	Demolition some time in the 3rdC.	Dunnett 1971: 31–43; Hull 1958: 269

	Circus possibly built in the 2ndC. but very little known about the structure.	Uncertain but it possibly remained standing, at least in part, into the post-Roman period.	P. Crummy 2005: 275
Dorchester	Alterations to the entrance and interior during the late 3rdC. and 4thC.	Some of the superstructure may have been demolished or robbed although there remains a large earthwork into the 21stC.	Bradley 1975: 56–8, 78–9
Exeter	No amphitheatre or theatre known.	Uncertain	
Gloucester	No amphitheatre or theatre known.	Uncertain	
Leicester	No amphitheatre or theatre known.	Uncertain	
Lincoln	No amphitheatre or theatre known.	Uncertain	
London	A number of new floors laid in the late 3rdC.	Robbing of walls after abandonment in the late 4thC. or later. Part of the structure may have remained standing into the medieval period.	Bateman 1997: 68; Bateman 1998: 52–3; Bateman 2000: 41
Silchester	The structure was rebuilt in the mid-3rdC. but there is little evidence for use in the 4thC.	The walls may have been robbed in the late 4thC. or early 5thC. but much remains standing into the 21stC.	Fulford 1989: 58, 192
Verulamium	The theatre was reconstructed c. AD 300 but was then filled with organic earth.	Uncertain about demolition.	Kenyon 1935: 239–40
Winchester	No theatre or amphitheatre known.	Uncertain	
Wroxeter	No theatre or amphitheatre known except for a possible enclosure in the west of the town which may have served as a type of amphitheatre or theatre.	Uncertain	Bushe-Fox 1916: 20–2; G. Webster 1975: 58; R. White and Barker 1998: 95
York	No theatre or amphitheatre known.	Uncertain	

Table 7.3 Details of the known date of the latest structural alterations and demolition of the spectacle buildings in each town.

7.5.1 *Dorchester*

Excavations at the amphitheatre in Dorchester took place in the early twentieth century but were written-up and published in the 1970s (Bradley 1975). This means that some of the evidence may be problematic but the available data does indicate that there were some structural changes made to the building in the late Roman period. Bradley (*ibid.*: 78) suggested that this took place after the structure had ceased to function as an amphitheatre but this is difficult to prove with certainty since there is little direct evidence for the use of the structure in any period (see above).

Analysis of the early excavations suggested structural alterations, including the erosion of the seating banks in the early fourth century and the end of use of the east and west recesses. The wall of the south recess was knocked through to create a new entrance to the arena, which suggests that it was still in some kind of use. The northern entrance also appears to have been rebuilt, there being evidence for what are described as ‘rustic pedestals’, each consisting of Purbeck marble fragments (*ibid.*: 56–8). There is some evidence that accompanying these two features were post-holes and a line of timber uprights, which might indicate that they continued to form some kind of gateway. The dating evidence is limited but a sherd of New Forest Ware found within one of the post-holes, and coins of Carausius (AD 286–93) and Constantine I (AD 306–12) found in the silt cut by the timber features suggest a fourth century date (*ibid.*). The surviving evidence does not allow any interpretation of function but what can be inferred is that people continued to come to the building and perhaps to congregate here.

7.5.2 *Cirencester*

Late structural changes to the entrance of the amphitheatre have also been identified (Diagram 31). The second half of the fourth century saw the demolition of the masonry passage walls and covering vault at the northeast entrance and metalled surfaces being laid down over the remains (Holbrook 1998: 166). The southeast and northeast chambers were also demolished, but the arena wall was rebuilt. A coin of AD 270, which lay in the latest floor level of the

southwest chamber, provides a *terminus post quem* date for the demolition of this chamber, whilst the latest coins associated with the rebuilding of the arena wall dated to the period AD 330–48 (*ibid.*). Probably in the early fifth century, stone blocks narrowed the entrance passage into the arena; a coin of AD 383–7 was found in a layer beneath the stones (*ibid.*: 169). Without more evidence it is not possible to know whether this indicates a greater need for security, but it does demonstrate that the building was still in use at this time.

7.5.3 Other towns

Other amphitheatres that have been excavated relatively recently are London (Bateman 1998) and Silchester (Fulford 1989) but there is not the same evidence here for architectural changes made to the buildings in the late Roman period. The structures did, however, remain standing into the post-Roman period. The date of demolition of the London amphitheatre is not precisely known although coins in some of the robber trenches suggest a date after AD 367 (Bateman 1998: 52–3; 2000: 41), indicating destruction in the late fourth century or later, as the robber trenches may only represent partial robbing in the late Roman period. Remains of the amphitheatre at Silchester survive today. Excavations indicate that in the medieval period it first appears to have contained a single-aisled hall, but by the twelfth century it was being used as a fortification (Fulford 1989: 193–5). Excavations of the amphitheatre at Chester have produced some important results for comparison. At least two of its entrances were deliberately walled up in the latest Roman period perhaps in the early fifth century. This might indicate some kind of defensive structure (Ainsworth and Wilmott 2005: 8). A timber structure was discovered within the arena which has been interpreted as an early post-Roman hall possibly indicating a power base here (*ibid.*: 7–8) and clearly the monumental structure itself remained important.

At Canterbury, the theatre has not been excavated beyond a small number of minor trenches (Frere 1970) but it is clear that it remained a significant monument influencing the street-grid and not being robbed until after the Norman Conquest. At Colchester, the theatre at Gosbecks seems to have been demolished in the third century (Dunnett 1971: 41) but the theatre within

the town may have remained standing into the post-Roman period (P. Crummy 1982) although very little is known about it. Nothing is known about the later use of the circus outside Colchester because of limited excavations and poor dating evidence (P. Crummy 2005).

Similarly, the amphitheatre at Chichester was only very partially excavated in the 1930s (G. White 1936). Claims that it was demolished in the second or third century were based on the lack of later pottery, but as very few sherds were uncovered these conclusions are problematic. There is no evidence for the demolition of the theatre at Verulamium but structural analysis suggests that it remained a monumental feature in the town into the fifth century and later (Kenyon 1935). This building has received attention because of the late ‘dark earth’ material and large number of late coins from within the structure which may indicate its continued use (see chapter 10).

7.5.4 Discussion

Theatres and amphitheatres in Britain, as discussed, may well have had a variety of uses, including religious ceremonies, throughout the Roman Period, making specifically late use difficult to show. Interpretations of the late use and structural change of amphitheatres in Britain include suggestions they were made into defensible refuges because of threats of invasion and violence at this time (cf. Fulford 1989: 194; Wachter 1975: 314). There is some evidence from the Continent to support this idea although, there, amphitheatres were converted to strong points incorporated into town walls, which does not appear to have happened in Britain. Examples include Amiens in *Gallia Belgica* (Bayard and Massy 1983: 222) and Tours in *Gallia Lugdunensis* (Knight 2001: 61). The amphitheatres at Dorchester (Bradley 1975: 78–9) and Cirencester (Holbrook 1998: 169–71) which are most often considered to have been refuges were not part of the walls. In Britain there is much less evidence surviving for activity within the amphitheatres at this time compared with on the Continent. At Nîmes, *Gallia Narbonensis*, for example, structures were built within the amphitheatre (Monteil 1999: 432–3). In Spain, too, there is evidence for buildings and other

activities within some theatres and amphitheatres in the later Roman period, such as at Italica (Rodríguez Gutiérrez 2004) and Cartagena (*Carthago Nova*), where there were many market buildings (Casal and Gascó 1993: 103), though these do not seem to be related to a security issue.

It is thought that amphitheatres may have gone out of use because of the Christian condemnation of gladiatorial combat and the centres of paganism they represented (Bomgardner 2000: 201–2). Where there is evidence that the games continued to the sixth century, especially in Rome, Italy and the East (*ibid.*: 197–220), this implies there was a benefactor able to pay for them; no evidence exists for this in Britain. Bomgardner (2000: 219) discusses evidence, for example, of chariot races in the amphitheatre at Constantinople in the sixth century and repairs and use of the Colosseum in Rome, also in the sixth century. On the Continent there is evidence that some amphitheatres retained religious and public roles after their use for games ceased. An inscription from Tarragona (*Tarraco*), for example, indicates its repair by the Emperor Constantine (Dupré Raventós 2004: 69–72) but by the sixth century a *basilica* was built within the arena (*ibid.*) indicating religious activity – whether this was also a continuation from pagan ceremonies is uncertain. No inscriptions survive for Britain, but from the archaeology it can be said that in many cases the amphitheatres remained standing into the late Roman period. The evidence assessed here indicates that they continued to frame spaces and activities that took place within and around them.

7.6 Temples

Temple structures are usually recognised in the archaeological record through their distinctive building plan, either being of classical plan or, more usually in Britain, of Romano-Celtic design (Wilkes 1996: 1).¹⁴⁹ Despite this, there is still uncertainty about the identification of some buildings as temples in Britain.

¹⁴⁹ The Romano-Celtic design of temple consisted of a square chamber (*cella*) surrounded by an ambulatory and this could also be set within a larger precinct (*temenos*) (Wilkes 1996: 1).

Where only small areas of the buildings have been uncovered, the interpretation of the structure as a temple is often problematic. At Gloucester, for example, the remains at Westgate Street were originally interpreted as the edge of a bathhouse (Heighway and Garrod 1980) but Hurst (1999b: 155–7) suggests that a *peribolos* (court enclosed by a wall) of a temple might be more likely. At Cirencester, excavations within *insula* VI opposite the *basilica* uncovered an area of courtyard and section of the portico of a building of monumental nature which have led to suggestions that it may have been the *temenos* of a temple, although little else is known (Holbrook 1998: 139–40). In the case of small towns, temples often seem to have been the only public building and they sometimes had a central position, as at Elms Farm, Heybridge, in Essex (Atkinson and Preston 1998) and Westhawk Farm in Kent (Booth 2001). This central location and surrounding open spaces indicate that the temples were perhaps involved in market and administration activities.

Within Roman London there are a number of large monumental complexes known. Their functions remain enigmatic, but perhaps included some kind of religious role without the buildings being wholly temple complexes. The complex described as an ‘Allectan Palace’, by the side of the Thames, excavated on small sites including Peter’s Hill and Sunlight Wharf, was built in the later third century. The fact that the date of its construction in AD 294, dated by dendrochronology, coincides with the reign of Allectus has led to suggestions that it was a palace built by Allectus but there is no definite proof of this (T. Williams 1993: 28). It reused masonry apparently from an earlier complex on the site and baths here make a religious interpretation possible (T. Williams 1993: 26–32). Further masonry that apparently came from these buildings was found within the late riverside wall. This stonework displayed religious features, including depictions of gods that had come from religious monuments that had been part of the complex (C. Hill *et al.* 1980: 125–32). It is uncertain whether the new buildings continued any of the functions of the earlier ones. Across the Thames at Southwark there was another large complex of uncertain function which included a number of large

wings of rooms and a bathhouse of comparable size to that at Huggin Hill (Yule 2005: 50–72). Some sort of religious and/or military role is a possibility here.

Relatively few sites in urban contexts have produced many obviously religious artefacts such as statuettes and regalia. This contrasts with some rural sites such as Uley (A. Woodward and Leach 1993) and Hayling Island (King and Soffe), and could be the result of post-Roman reuse and disturbance of the urban sites, or perhaps of the differing rituals that occurred in the buildings.

Temples are also useful when considering movement around, to and from towns as they would have played an important role in religious ceremonies and festivals (Esmonde Cleary 2005). They may well have attracted people to the towns from long distances and, as Fulford (1999) has shown for the locations of temples at Silchester, this would have influenced people's perceptions and experiences of individual towns. Some temples would also have had restrictions of access both in terms of time (of day and year) and type of person, reflecting aspects such as class (Stambaugh 1978: 574–80). This will have intensified the experience of entering the temple and worshipping within. While there would have been other aspects of the landscape imbued with meaning, including natural features, temples were an important way in which the religious landscape was created and negotiated. Roman temples in Britain were also apparently sometimes located on sites of pre-Roman religious importance (A. Woodward 1992: 17–30) seeing a longer-term continuity of activity (*ibid.*: 63).

Despite the presence of temples and shrines within towns it must also be acknowledged that there were other forms of religious expression within the urban centres (see chapters 4 and 5; cf. Fulford 2001). Religious activity took place at other public buildings, including theatres, amphitheatres, the *forum-basilica* and bathhouses and towns also formed part of the wider ritualised landscape. Temples and their precincts encouraged many diverse public activities including meetings, business transactions and performances (J. Anderson 1997: 243; Knipe 1988: 125; Perring 1991b: 280; Stambaugh 1978). In some cases there are traces of activity beneath the temples, as at Canterbury (Frere 1977: 423) and Verulamium (Lowther 1937),

and, despite the caution required in assuming a continuation of religious activity, it is possible that these were the locations of pre-Roman shrines representing continuity in the religious landscape.

A number of temples display structural alterations in the late Roman period indicating a change or continuation in use (table 7.4). Figure 7.4 shows that of the thirty-eight definite temples known within the towns, fifteen buildings had at least parts of the structures standing into the later fourth and fifth centuries. A further five temples may have been standing, with there being insufficient evidence to be certain, and only three definitely appear to have been demolished by the fourth century. For a further fifteen known temples there is not enough evidence for an analysis of their structural condition in the late Roman period to be possible.

7.6.1 *Caerwent*

The temple at Caerwent, which was not built until around AD 330, was maintained throughout the fourth century, and into the fifth, with evidence for a number of late alterations (Diagram 24). These included the addition of a range of rooms to the inner side of the entrance hall suggesting that more space was needed for the activities taking place in the hall (Brewer 1993: 59). A coin of Valentinian (AD 364–75) was found beneath repair work to the foundations of one of the pilasters in the entrance hall (Brewer 1990: 79; 1993: 59). There have been various interpretations regarding the role of this entrance hall and rear range of rooms. Reece (pers. comm.) and Knight (1996: 36) have argued that the hall may have taken on the role of the *basilica*, after that had decayed, since it would have been more convenient and economical to maintain.¹⁵⁰ The hall appears to remain in use into the fifth century although there is no definite evidence for its use and, as discussed, there are reasons to suggest that at least parts of the *forum-basilica* remained standing to a contemporary date.

¹⁵⁰ Other interpretations have included priests' quarters and shops selling religious votive gifts and souvenirs (de la Bédoyère 1991; Wachter 1995: 386).

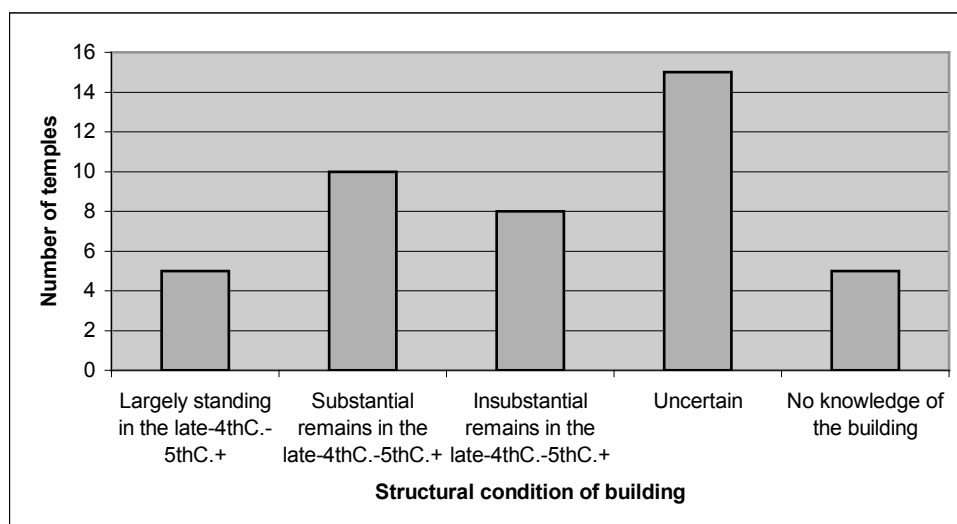


Figure 7.4 Graph showing the number of temples from the twenty-one towns where at least part of the building remained standing into the later fourth century and beyond.

Town	Alterations	Date of Demolition	References
Aldborough	No temples known.	Uncertain	
Brough-on-Humber	No temples known.	Uncertain	
Caerwent	Addition of a range of rooms to the inner side of the entrance hall of the temple and the construction of two half-domed niches in the 4thC.	Uncertain but remained standing into the 5thC.	Brewer 1990: 79; Brewer 1993: 59; Frere 1985: 260
	Possible external octagonal temple but little is known about it.	Uncertain	Hudd 1913: 447; Wachter 1995: 387
Caistor-by-Norwich	Temple A <i>insula</i> IX: uncertain about alterations and use.	Uncertain	Atkinson 1930: 99–102
	Temple B <i>insula</i> IX: uncertain about alterations and use.	Uncertain	Atkinson 1930: 99–102
	Extramural temple: no structural changes evident in the 3rdC. or 4thC. but the temple may have continued in use.	Uncertain	Gurney 1986
Canterbury	Central temple precinct: a new courtyard surface was laid in the 4thC. made out of reused stone.	Uncertain about demolition but use of the courtyard continued into the 5thC.	P. Bennett pers. comm.; P. Bennett and Nebiker 1989; Frere 1977: 424

	Temple at St. Gabriel's chapel: construction of a timber building within a pre-temple 'townhouse'.	Demolition in the 4thC.	P. Bennett pers. comm.; Driver <i>et al.</i> 1990: 89–91
	Temple at Gas Lane: uncertain due to disturbance.	Uncertain due to disturbance.	P. Bennett <i>et al.</i> 1982: 44
	Temple at Burgate Street: Built in the mid-3rdC.	Destroyed by the late 4thC.	Frere and Stow 1983: 41–9
Carmarthen	Temple built in the 1stC. but out of use by the 2ndC.	Demolition in the mid-2ndC.	H. James 1984: 51; H. James 2003: 150
Chelmsford	Octagonal temple built in the 4thC.	Demolition in the late 4thC. or early 5thC.	Wickendon 1992: 39–41, 141
Chichester	Very little known about the temples of Chichester.	Uncertain	
Cirencester	<i>Insula</i> VI building temple?: new floor surface in the courtyard laid in the 4thC. The corridor was paved with a tessellated floor of chequerboard pattern <i>c.</i> AD 330.	Use into the 5thC. but uncertain about the demolition.	Holbrook 1998: 134–5
Colchester	Temple of Claudius: structural alterations in the 4thC. now doubted but probable continuation of use into the 5thC.	The building was probably still standing into the Norman period.	Drury 1984; P. Crummy 1997: 120
	Balkerne Lane temple: demolition of the ambulatory in the late 4thC. leaving the <i>cella</i> standing.	The <i>cella</i> may have remained standing into the post-Roman period since the foundations survived to the height of the latest surviving Roman layer.	P. Crummy 1984: 125
	Balkerne Lane shrine: uncertain about later alterations.	The building was demolished in the 5thC.	P. Crummy 1980: 267–8; P. Crummy 1984: 124
	Grammar School Temple: uncertain due to poor survival.	Uncertain	Hull 1958: 236–8
	Gosbecks Temple: uncertain due to poor survival but possible use into the 4thC.	Uncertain	P. Crummy 1980: 260; P. Crummy pers. comm.; Hull 1958: 264
	Sheepen Large Temple; St. Helena's School: use into the 4thC.	Careful demolition in the 4thC. or 5thC.	P. Crummy 1980: 252; Hull 1958: 230

	Sheepen Small Temple; St. Helena's School: uncertain or late changes.	Uncertain	P. Crummy 1980: 252
	Sheepen Temple: uncertain.	Uncertain	P. Crummy 1980: 252
	Sheepen Temple: uncertain of later alterations; possibly out of use by the 4thC.	Uncertain	P. Crummy 1980: 252
Dorchester	No temples known.	Uncertain	
Exeter	No temples known.	Uncertain	
Gloucester	Temple precinct: demolition in the 4thC. but then further construction on the site followed by a covering of metalling over the whole site.	Demolition after c. AD 370.	Heighway and Garrod 1980: 78; Heighway <i>et al.</i> 1979: 163
	Northgate Street temple: refloorings and structural alterations with some internal walls being converted to colonnades.	Date of demolition uncertain; use may have continued into the 5thC.	Hurst 1972: 65
Leicester	St. Nicholas Circle temple: little evidence for structural changes but use continued into the 4thC.	Uncertain	Wacher 1995: 359; D. Wilson 1970: 286
Lincoln	Lower town temple complex: little is known	Uncertain	Stocker 2003
London	Temple of Mithras: structural alterations in the 4thC. included the removal of the columns which had divided the nave from the aisles.	It is uncertain whether the building was demolished or left to decay.	Henig 1998; Shepherd 1998: 84; Perring 1991a: 115
	Riverside temple complex: possibly out of use by the 3rdC. or it may have continued in use when the remains from the first complex was used to build a new complex.	Demolition of components of the structure in the 3rdC. There is some evidence for the robbing of rebuilt parts in the late 4thC.	T. Williams 1993: 11, 27, 32
	Tabard square temples, Southwark: they may have remained standing into the 4thC. The deposition of a dedicatory plaque in the 4thC. might suggest that the temples had changed use or were demolished. Deposition here might also indicate that the religious nature of the area was still recognised.	Not completely certain but possibly in the 4thC.	Durrani 2004
Silchester	<i>Insula</i> VII temple: uncertain about late phases.	Uncertain	G. Fox and St. John Hope 1894: 206–9

	<i>Insula</i> XXX temple precinct: uncertain about later structural changes although probably continued in use into the 4thC.	Uncertain	Boon 1974: 155–156; G. Fox and St. John Hope 1890: 744–9
	<i>Insula</i> XXXV temple: uncertain.	Uncertain	Boon 1974: 153; St. John Hope 1908: 206–8
	<i>Insula</i> XXXVI temple: uncertain but probable continuation of use into the 4thC.	Uncertain	Boon 1974: 153
Verulamium	<i>Insula</i> XVI temple: 2 wings were added in the 3rdC. and in the later 4thC. the east gate was demolished and a new gateway constructed on the west.	It is uncertain whether the building was demolished or decayed naturally.	Niblett 1993: 91; Kenyon 1935: 241; Lowther 1937: 33–4
	Triangular temple: repairs to floors in the 3rdC. and continuation of use into the 4thC.	It is uncertain whether the building was demolished or decayed naturally.	Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 117
	Folly Lane temple: largely fallen into decay by the 3rdC. but may have continued in use.	The absence of building material may suggest that it was deliberately demolished but uncertain of date.	Niblett 1999: 71, 417
Winchester	The use of the temple ceased in the 3rdC.	Demolition in the 3rdC.	Biddle 1975: 299
Wroxeter	Uncertain of structural changes although use may have continued into the 4thC.	Uncertain	Bushe-Fox 1914: 9
York	Wellington Row ?temple: extension in the 3rdC. and then use into the 4thC.	Uncertain	Ottaway 1993: 112–4; 1999: 147; Whyman 2001

Table 7.4 Details of the known date of the latest structural alterations and demolition of the temples in each town.

7.6.2 Colchester

At the Balkerne Lane temple in Colchester there is evidence for differential robbing activities. The ambulatory of the temple was completely robbed, including its foundations, in the late Roman period (P. Crummy 1984: 125), but the foundations of the *cella* survived to the height

of the latest Roman layers, indicating that it was only after abandonment of the building that these walls were demolished or had collapsed. It would appear that the *cella* stood in isolation in the fourth century, which might indicate a different function; the excavator suggested a church (*ibid.*) but its continuation as a temple or another use is also quite possible.

Little is known of the Temple of Claudius in Colchester but some of its walls are visible within the cellars of the medieval castle. Studying the known evidence and plan, mainly from excavations in the 1930s, Drury (1984) suggested that there was evidence for a 2m thick wall built across the front of the temple in the fourth century and also for the demolition of the temple façade. He suggested that this created a long and narrow space with an apse; a church being formed by the conversion of the building. The latest coins on the site were of Valentinian II (AD 382–93) and Theodosius I (AD 379–95) and pottery found dated up to AD 360–70. Excavations in 1996 beneath the castle in the supposed location of the wall, however, failed to support these earlier findings, arguing that this had merely been a hypothetical projection (P. Crummy 1997: 120; pers. comm.) but the building appears to have remained standing.¹⁵¹

7.6.3 *Verulamium*

Another example of a temple where a conversion to a church has been suggested is the *insula* XVI temple in the centre of Verulamium near the theatre, although the excavations of this structure took place in the 1930s. Lowther (1937: 33–4) suggested that at around AD 400, indicated by coins of the House of Theodosius, a new gateway to the building was constructed in the centre of the colonnade on the west side of the temple. This western gateway appeared to replace the earlier eastern entrance (*ibid.*) and therefore might indicate a change in orientation of the building. Although this need not equate with its conversion to a

¹⁵¹ According to Crummy (*ibid.*), however, this need not necessarily mean that the function of the building did not change in the later Roman period as suggested by a piece of pottery with a *chi-rho* symbol found in the 1996 excavations. Although one piece of pottery on its own, of course, cannot indicate the function of the building.

church, it would indicate that the building remained in some kind of use into the fifth century and possibly beyond.

7.6.4 *Canterbury*

At Canterbury, the small excavated areas of the central temple precinct ([Diagram 27](#)) indicate that demolition and robbing of the precinct portico and levelling of at least some internal buildings took place in the fourth century; the area was covered by a new courtyard surface on which were many fourth century coins ([see section 11.3.1](#); unpublished excavations, P. Bennett pers. comm.; Frere 1977: 424). The new surface indicates that the area continued to be important within the town centre. The other temples known at Canterbury are only partially excavated and many have been badly disturbed. The temple at Gas Lane has coins dating to AD 330–40 in disturbed layers (P. Bennett *et al.* 1982: 44) but there is nothing to indicate that it was demolished and it may have remained standing to a later date. The Burgate Street temple has late fourth century pottery in its demolition layer (Frere and Stow 1983: 47) but this need not necessarily indicate the date at which the building was destroyed since the act of demolition can disturb earlier layers.

7.6.5 *London*

At London, masonry of the riverside temple complex was incorporated into later buildings on the site and elsewhere, indicating that it had been destroyed by the end of the third century (T. Williams 1993: 11, 27). The monumental nature of the structures that were then built on the site may, however, suggest a continuation rather than change in use (*ibid.*: 28–9). At the temple of Mithras there are alterations to the structure in the fourth century with the removal of the columns which had separated the nave from the aisles, apparently creating a larger open space (Shepherd 1998: 84). This appears to have coincided with the burial of many religious sculptures within the building. The definite function of the structure is uncertain¹⁵²

¹⁵² The presence of a sculpture of Bacchus led Henig (1998) to suggest that the building had now become a *bacchium*. Croxford's (2003) analysis of the material from this building, however, suggested that the large number of sculptures found in the

but it remained standing into at least the sixth century (*ibid.*: 97). Internal alterations to the building in the late fourth century, creating a more open space, suggest that many people were still using it.

7.6.6 Other towns

Late phases of temples from the other towns in the study have not survived well. These include the temples at Caistor-by-Norwich (Atkinson 1930; Gurney 1986), Wroxeter (Bushe-Fox 1914) and Leicester (D. Wilson 1970: 286), although there were some late fourth century coins from this latter site. At Winchester, the temple was demolished in the third century (Biddle 1975: 299). No temples have been identified with certainty at Cirencester, although the enigmatic monumental building in *insula* VI, of which only a small area has been excavated (Diagram 32; Holbrook 1998: 135–8) may have been one. Results from this site, including well worn coins of *c.* AD 400, indicate that it remained standing into at least the fifth century (*ibid.*: 135–8).

At Gloucester, there is an equally problematic building excavated at 63–71 Northgate Street which, it has been argued, functioned as a temple. The excavations indicated floor resurfacings sealing coins of the fourth century and changes to the internal walls, these seemingly being converted into arcades or colonnades in a later period (Hurst 1972: 65). This would demonstrate use well into the fourth century and perhaps beyond.¹⁵³

7.6.7 Discussion

That the use of temple buildings in the Roman period was variable, with many activities taking place within and around them (Stambaugh 1978), makes studying their function in the late Roman period more complex. It is perhaps overly simplistic to rely on historical documents such as the Theodosian Code, banning the use of temples for pagan religion and

excavations indicated that they had been collected together from other places and brought to the building. He doubts whether any of the sculptures can be used to describe a definite use of the building although clearly something was going on here.

¹⁵³ Rural temples demonstrate similar complex evidence for late use, often beyond apparent evidence for their structural decay, including such important sites as Hayling Island (Downey *et al.* 1979) and Uley (A. Woodward and Leach 1993).

ordering their preservation for alternative use, to date the end of use of the buildings (see section 6.3.3 for these code entries). There are well known examples in Rome where temples were converted into churches (Hansen 2003; Webb 2000) but there is very limited evidence in Britain for such use of these structures. Examples include the temple of Fortuna Virilis which became the church of Santa Maria ad Gradellis between AD 872 and 880 and the church of San Nicola was constructed in the *Forum Boarium* out of the parts of three adjoining temples (Hansen 2003: 182). Heijmans (2006: 27–8) has recently emphasised that there are only a very few definite examples of temples in Gaul that were converted into churches and that the process was less common than is usually assumed;¹⁵⁴ this is likely also for Britain. The location of temples within the townscape and wider surroundings, often on sites that had already been used for religious activity, may also be an important reason why some of the sites remained in use. It is important not to see evidence for structural decay as always indicating the end of the value of a site.

7.7. The *macellum*

The *macellum*, a market building (Sear 1982: 31), generally consisting of rows of rooms around a courtyard, would also have been a location for social interaction. There have only been a few examples of *macella* identified in Britain (figure 7.5 and table 7.5) although open spaces such as gravelled areas were probably also used for market activities. Buildings identified as *macella* through their structural plan of a central space with small ‘shops’ around the outside, have been found at Verulamium (Niblett 2001: 77; Richardson 1944),¹⁵⁵ Wroxeter (Ellis 2000), Cirencester (Holbrook 1998) and Gloucester (Rhodes 1974: 31).

¹⁵⁴Where it does occur there is, of course, the issue of who owned the temples and how they became properties of the Church but this would be very difficult to determine without good documentary evidence.

¹⁵⁵ For Verulamium, Niblett (2005a: 105) has recently suggested that a structure identified as a *macellum* may instead have functioned as a *nymphaeum* since water management seems to have been a major preoccupation throughout the life of the building. This is still uncertain but it does emphasise further the problem of assuming the function of archaeological structures with little supportive evidence.

Positive evidence for the function of these known buildings is lacking and the identification is not always secure.

At Wroxeter, the plan of the building does suggest a *macellum*, with small rooms around three sides of a courtyard and the fourth side fronting Watling Street (Ellis 2000). There are also traces surviving that point to an upper storey, but it is not possible to discern the functions of individual rooms. What is revealing is that the building was an integral part of the bathhouse complex, which indicates some of the wide range of activities that would have taken place in this *insula*. At some towns, the evidence is much more limited, as at Cirencester, where the site of a *macellum* has been suggested only through an exposed colonnaded external portico with possible rooms to the rear (Holbrook 1998: 180).

Where *macella* have been identified they do appear to have continued to a late date, which might indicate continued market functions within the town. Pits containing food and craft waste have come from late phases of the *macellum* at Wroxeter (P. Barker *et al.* 1997: 55–7) and glass-working waste from the *macellum* at Leicester (N. Cooper unpublished; Wachter 1995: 362). There is also evidence for timber structures built within and around public buildings in the late Roman period which have produced evidence for market activity (see chapter 9), indicating market activities taking place in locations other than *macella*.¹⁵⁶ At Verulamium, alterations to the *macellum* in the late third to fourth century included the addition of two central walls with piers which divided the building into three aisles. There is no definite evidence for the demolition of this building in the Roman period and there remains the possibility that it continued to stand into post-Roman times (Niblett 2005a: 105).

¹⁵⁶ Market activities, of course, will have taken place in many locations including open areas (e.g. Heybridge, Essex), late pre-Roman period open places and Roman *fora*.

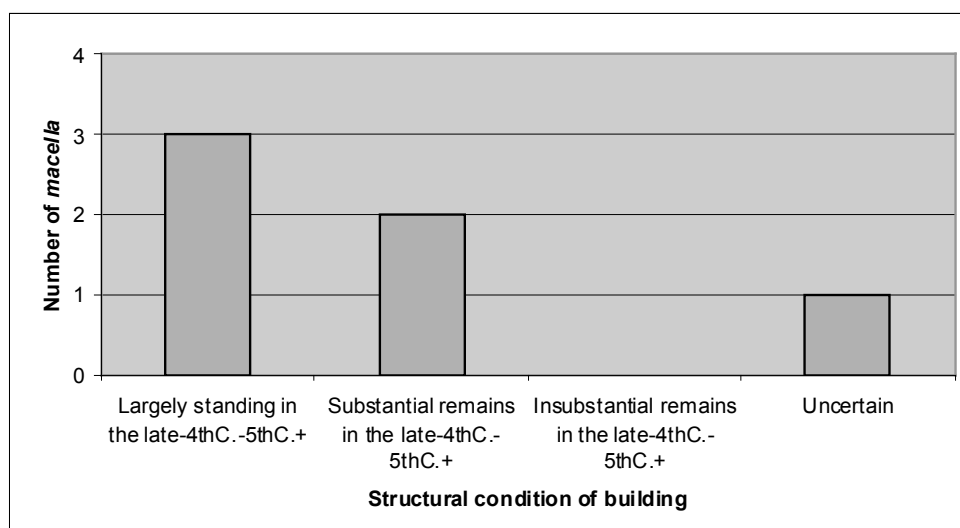


Figure 7.5 Graph showing the number of known *macella* where at least part of the building remained standing into the later fourth century and beyond.

Town	Alterations	Date of Demolition	References
Aldborough	No <i>macellum</i> known.	Uncertain	
Brough-on-Humber	No <i>macellum</i> known.	Uncertain	
Caerwent	No <i>macellum</i> known.	Uncertain	
Caistor-by-Norwich	No <i>macellum</i> known.	Uncertain	
Canterbury	No <i>macellum</i> known.	Uncertain	
Carmarthen	No <i>macellum</i> known.	Uncertain	
Chelmsford	No <i>macellum</i> known.	Uncertain	
Chichester	No <i>macellum</i> known.	Uncertain	
Cirencester	Structural alterations in the 3rdC. and 4thC. and continuation of use into the 5thC.	It is uncertain whether or when the structure was demolished.	Holbrook 1998: 186
Colchester	No <i>macellum</i> known.	Uncertain	
Dorchester	No <i>macellum</i> known.	Uncertain	
Exeter	No <i>macellum</i> known.	Uncertain	
Gloucester	New floors and reconstruction of the verandah in the 3rdC. or 4thC.	It is uncertain whether the structure was demolished.	Rhodes 1974: 33
Leicester	Fire destroyed some of the building in the late 4thC. but there is evidence for the continuation of activity in some parts.	Fire damaged occurred in the late 4thC. but it was not demolished.	N. Cooper unpublished; Wacher 1995: 362

Lincoln	No <i>macellum</i> known.	Uncertain	
London	<i>Macellum</i> remains problematic.	Uncertain	
Silchester	No <i>macellum</i> known.	Uncertain	
Verulamium	Structural alterations occurred in the late 3rdC. to 4thC. including the addition of two central walls with piers which divided the building into 3 aisles.	Demolition is uncertain; it may have remained standing into the post-Roman period.	Niblett 2005a: 105
Winchester	No <i>macellum</i> known.	Uncertain	
Wroxeter	Repairs and new floors were laid in the 3rdC.	Destruction and robbing possibly took place in the 4thC.	Ellis 2000: 57–8
York	No <i>macellum</i> known.	Uncertain	

Table 7.5 Details of the known date of the latest structural alterations and demolition of the *macella* in each town.

At Cirencester, use of the *insula* II structure continued into the fifth century with new floors and structural changes (Holbrook 1998: 183–5). Another possible *macellum* at Gloucester appears to have received new floors and a reconstructed verandah during the late third and fourth century (Rhodes 1974: 33). The *macellum* at Leicester suffered from fire in the fourth century but there are some indications of repair work, including new floors laid over the debris (N. Cooper unpublished; Wachter 1995: 362). At Wroxeter, the *macellum* has evidence for new herringbone floors laid in the late third to early fourth century (Ellis 2000: 55–6) and the structure remained standing in the fourth and fifth century and possibly beyond.

Regarding the fortress site at Chester, one interpretation of the monumental elliptical building is a *macellum*. This building began to be built around the AD 70s but was not completed until the third century after a break in construction (Mason 2000: 109–33). The structure consisted of an oval court surrounded by a portico and twelve rooms. Changes to the building indicate that it remained in use into the fifth century (*ibid.*: 146). The design of the building, however, has led to other interpretations of the function including an *imago mundi* and theatre (*ibid.*: 18–47). There is no definite evidence for the use of the building but its unique design may suggest that the market function was combined with other uses.

7.8 *Mansio* buildings

Mansiones were the official stations in the *cursus publicus* system across the Empire although it was not always the case that a specifically built structure was used for this purpose (E. Black 1995: 9). There is no detailed description of a *mansio* in literary sources making identification difficult (*ibid.*: 17).¹⁵⁷ In Romano-British towns, recognised *mansiones* are in the form of large courtyard structures, usually near the edge of the town on the road network, although it is not always possible to distinguish them from courtyard houses with complete certainty. *Mansiones* may have had a wider variety of functions than the specific role that they played in the *cursus publicus*, over time acquiring other functions such as providing the setting for transactions of local government (E. Black 1995: 94). Black (*ibid.*: 94) draws particular attention to the tripartite entrance hall identified in the plan of some *mansiones*, including those at Silchester and Verulamium, and discusses the likelihood that the main hall would have been used for formal functions of government. Their prominent positions within some towns where few or no other public buildings are yet known, such as Chelmsford (Drury 1988) and Godmanchester (H. Green 1975), indicates that they probably performed some similar functions to the *forum-basilica* complexes here. In some cases ‘small towns’, such as Brandon Camp and Leintwardine, developed around *mansiones* (E. Black 1995: 29–30).

Possible *mansiones* have also been identified at Aldborough, Canterbury and Carmarthen, although very little is known about the structures due to the small scale of the excavations. At Wroxeter, a possible *mansio* has been recognised through aerial photography and geophysical survey (R. White and Barker 1998: 75) whilst excavated examples come from Silchester (Boon 1974: 81), Verulamium (E. Black 1995: 81–2; Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 95) and two at London (Diagram 39; Bateman 1998: 56; Cowan 1992). A courtyard structure has

¹⁵⁷ Black (1995: 17–8) uses the *mansio* at Inchtuthil as a type-site for examining evidence for *mansiones* in Britain although there is no documentary or epigraphic evidence stating that this was definitely a *mansio*. Features included barrack-like buildings for accommodation, an entrance hall, a bath building, possible stabling and yards. Some rooms with under floor heating were interpreted as higher class accommodation. It lay near the fortress gate and next to the main road.

recently been excavated at Leicester on the Vine Street site, in the northeast of the town. This building may have been a *mansio* but instead it could also have been a townhouse (T. Higgins pers. comm.).

Of the identified buildings (figure 7.6 and table 7.6), there would appear to be a number where at least part of the building remained standing into the fifth century and beyond, including the Leicester Vine Street building and the Chelmsford, Southwark (London), Silchester and Verulamium buildings. There is insufficient data on the *mansiones* in Aldborough, Canterbury and Carmarthen to be certain about their late use. Parts of the *mansio* at Southwark appear to have been demolished in the early fourth century, but other parts of the structure (mostly beyond the limits of the excavation) seem to have remained standing and in use to a much later date (Cowan 1992: 60–1). That *mansiones* probably had a number of roles adds complexity to understanding their use in the later Roman period. If *mansiones* did take on some formal functions of local government, as argued by Black (1995: 94), then this role may have become more significant in the late Roman period in some towns if the *basilica* was no longer used for such functions.

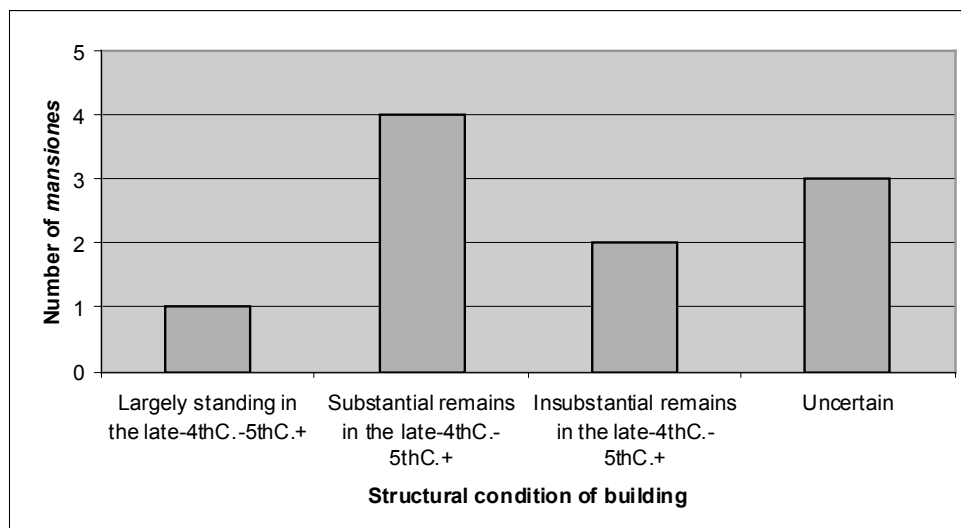


Figure 7.6 Graph showing the number of known *mansiones* where at least part of the building remained standing into the later fourth century and beyond.

Town	Alterations	Date of Demolition	References
Aldborough	Very little is known of the structure due to the small scale of the excavation in the 19thC.	Uncertain	North Yorkshire Sites and Monuments Record MNY 11278
Brough-on-Humber	No <i>mansio</i> known.	Uncertain	
Caerwent	No <i>mansio</i> known.	Uncertain	
Caistor-by-Norwich	No <i>mansio</i> known.	Uncertain	
Canterbury	There is a possible <i>mansio</i> on the Tannery site but very little is known about it.	Uncertain due to the very small area excavated.	P. Blockley 1987: 314
Carmarthen	Changes evident in the 3rdC.	Evidence for robbing of the walls in the early 4thC. and reuse of the site in the AD 350s although other parts of the site may have remained standing.	H. James 2003: 201–3
Chelmsford	There is evidence for rebuilding and repairs in the late 3rdC. and early 4thC.	Evidence for destruction and robbing but possibly not until the early 5thC.	Drury 1988: 34
Chichester	No <i>mansio</i> known.	Uncertain	
Cirencester	No <i>mansio</i> known.	Uncertain	
Colchester	No <i>mansio</i> known.	Uncertain	
Dorchester	No <i>mansio</i> known.	Uncertain	
Exeter	No <i>mansio</i> known.	Uncertain	
Gloucester	No <i>mansio</i> known.	Uncertain	
Leicester	Possible <i>mansio</i> building at Vine Street and it appears to have structural changes well into the fourth century and possibly later.	Uncertain of date of demolition or destruction but appears to be in the post-Roman period.	T. Higgins pers. comm.
Lincoln	No <i>mansio</i> known.	Uncertain	
London	Old Bailey Site: possible <i>mansio</i> built on the site of an earlier building in the 3rdC.	Possibly demolished in the mid-4thC. with the latest coin on the site being AD 335–41.	Bateman 1998: 56; Unpublished Museum of London Archaeology Service archive

			VAL88
	Southwark Street: evidence for rebuilding and structural alterations in the 3rdC. and into the 4thC.	Part of the building was demolished and robbed in the earlier 4thC. but other parts appear to have remained standing much later and possibly into the post-Roman period.	Cowan 1992: 53–61
Silchester	<i>Mansio</i> within <i>insula</i> VIII although little is known about the phases of activity due to early date of the excavations.	Uncertain but would appear to have remained standing at least into the 4thC.	Boon 1974: 81
Verulamium	The structure appears to have been altered in the early 4thC. with the extension of rooms and a tripartite entrance hall.	The date of destruction or demolition is uncertain but it probably remained standing into the post-Roman period.	E. Black 1995: 81–2; Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 95
Winchester	No <i>mansio</i> known.	Uncertain	
Wroxeter	Possible <i>mansio</i> identified through aerial photography and geophysical survey.	Uncertain since the building has not been excavated.	R. White and Barker 1998: 75
York	No <i>mansio</i> known.	Uncertain	

Table 7.6 Details showing the known date of the latest structural alterations and demolition of the known *mansiones* within each town.

7.9 Porticoes

Porticoes and colonnades were public structures in their own right as well as being used to define the spaces of other buildings. Porticoes were used to surround many public buildings, including *fora* and temples, but they also provided monumental walkways around *insulae* and became places to congregate, shelter and sell wares (J. Anderson 1997: 247–9); they were an influential part of daily life and invited people to meet and interact (Zanker 2000: 39; Perring 1991b: 280). They connected one public building with the other, and played a part in the movement of people around the town (MacDonald 1986: 117–8). Porticoes were classical

forms of town organisation but it seems there were fewer in Romano-British towns than in the towns of other provinces.¹⁵⁸

Known porticoes in Britain include those outside the St. Margaret's Street bathhouse and around the temple precinct in Canterbury (Bennett 1981; K. Blockley *et al.* 1995: 98–100), in front of buildings in *insulae* XIV and XXVII at Verulamium (Frere 1983: 84, 203), around the baths complex at Wroxeter (Ellis 2000: 19–25) and the *forum* at Lincoln (M. Jones 1999: 66).¹⁵⁹ Their association with the classical world has meant that evidence for their demolition or change of use in the towns of Roman Britain in the late Roman period is often considered to represent decline. There is some evidence that porticoes along streets and attached to public buildings were transformed in the late Roman period. Rather than decline, however, the evidence could indicate vitality with a more intensified use of space. Many of the porticoes which were originally free from material, suggesting that they were kept clear in the Roman period, now have evidence for timber stalls and activity continuing into the fifth century. Such is the case at Wroxeter, Canterbury and Leicester (K. Blockley *et al.* 1995; Ellis 2000: 58–68; N. Cooper unpublished). This activity within the porticoes will have had an impact on movement around the towns, but it also represents vibrancy and the continued importance of the town centres.

7.10 Monumental arches

Monumental arches also played a role in the organisation of space and the regulation of movement of people within the town (MacDonald 1986: 74–6). Arches were mechanisms of transition and also connected areas of the town (*ibid.*: 32, 74). Evidence from Rome shows that monumental arches were often decorated with scenes and images celebrating the emperors and important military victories (J. Ward-Perkins 1981: 429–30). There were

¹⁵⁸ They were probably also found only rarely in 'small towns'. An example in timber was possibly found surrounding a gravelled area in Godmanchester (H. Green 1975).

¹⁵⁹ At Lincoln known remains of the portico in front of the *forum* have been termed the 'Bailgate colonnade' and the column positions are marked out in the modern road and pavement (M. Jones 1999: 66).

sometimes four-square arches (*quadrifrons*) positioned at armature junctions, these structures also sometimes being placed at spots where significant actions had taken place in the past (*ibid.*: 87–91).¹⁶⁰

Very few monumental arches are known in Britain but it appears that the Balcerne Gate in the town walls at Colchester was originally a monumental arch prior to the construction of the defences (P. Crummy 1984: 15, 122) whilst at Verulamium, it seems that three monumental arches marked boundaries of earlier forms of the settlement (Frere 1983: 75–9; Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 76–8, 129). Another arch is known from London, represented by monumental stone reused in a fourth-century section of the town wall (Blagg 1980).

It appears that the identified examples did undergo changes in the late Roman period. The remains of the arches at Verulamium are very scanty because of heavy robbing which probably took place within the late Roman period (Frere 1983: 75–9). This would indicate changes in the organisation of the town but there is also evidence for much activity taking place in the town at a contemporary date. A monumental arch in London is known only through the stonework used in later structures (T. Williams 1993) but its demolition certainly did not indicate the decline of the town.

7.11 Town gates and town walls

Town gates will also have functioned as zones of passage and transition. They were on the town boundaries, which will have been defined through ceremony and ritual at the time of town foundation. Rykwert (1976: 136) describes the *pomoerium* at Rome, a strip of land used to define the town and build the town walls. This boundary had religious significance: the ‘gates were bridges over a forbidden tract of earth charged with menacing power’ (*ibid.*: 137). Crossing the town boundary will have been an act imbued with meaning (Perring 1991b: 282). As Rykwert states (1976: 139): ‘to cross over such a bridge [the passage through the *pomoerium*] is in itself a religious act’. The gates marked the only sanctioned crossing points and the town walls would have had a symbolic as well as functional importance.

¹⁶⁰ The only *quadrifrons* arch known in Britain is in a non-urban context at Richborough (Strong 1968: 72).

For Rome we have sources referring to gods associated with the gates and boundaries of the city – Janus was the god of the gates (*ibid.*: 137–9). Whilst this probably applied to towns across the Empire, we have no definite evidence relating to Britain. Creighton’s (2006) work has argued for the ritual foundation of towns in Roman Britain (see chapter 5), and evidence of religious deposits also indicates that boundaries around settlements were meaningful in prehistory (e.g. Gwilt 1997; J.D. Hill 1995b; Hingley 2006b). Gibbon’s impression of city gates (section 3.5.3) reflects the view that they represented markers and the boundaries of civilisation with barbarity lying outside. Knowledge of town gates in Roman Britain varies greatly. Remains of gates have survived at Silchester (Fulford 1984), Lincoln (M. Jones 2002: 59–60) and Caerwent (Ashby *et al.* 1904; Manning 2003) whilst those at towns such as Leicester (Cooper and Buckley 2003) have survived poorly due to intense later occupation.

Many of the defensive circuits around Romano-British towns were constructed earlier than in other provinces and began as earthworks such as at Caerwent (Manning 2003: 168–73), Verulamium (Niblett 2001: 71–2) and Wroxeter (R. White and Barker 1997: 98). They were then replaced with stone walls that usually followed the same circuits rather than reducing the size of the enclosed area, as often occurred in late Roman Gaul. Mattingly (2006a: 332) has suggested that the continued importance of these large enclosed areas might indicate links with memories of a proto-urban past in Britain. Other authors have also raised the possibility that Roman town walls might invoke the past of *oppida*, with the size of the enclosed area having more to do with Iron Age notions of power and display than with the desire to be seen as Roman (e.g. R. White and Gaffney 2003: 231; Wigley 2005).¹⁶¹ This may also relate to the

¹⁶¹ Like *oppida*, in some cases the walls enclosed watery areas, including floodplains and marshland, which might seem impracticable for occupation purposes. As mentioned in chapter 5, for example, excavations in the western and south-western parts of Canterbury uncovered evidence that large areas were flooded and uninhabitable from the early third century onwards (Pratt and Sweetinburgh 2004). At Cirencester, a low-lying area within the walls, known as Watermoor, is still liable to flood today and does not seem to have had much occupation in the Roman period (J. Paddock pers. comm.); a geophysical survey of Wroxeter also seems to suggest that the northeast part of the town where the Bell Brook flowed was not densely occupied (White and Gaffney 2003: 231). Like medieval towns (Schofield and Vince 1994: 187–8), both *oppida* and Roman towns are also likely to have had open spaces where crops were grown and animals were kept.

need for large open gatherings and sales of produce and livestock as part of the function of these sites.

In a few cases there is evidence from the late Roman period that town gates were blocked (table 7.7); this has been explained in terms of increased insecurity and economic decline (e.g. Ashby *et al.* 1904: 92). The example of the Ridigate at Canterbury, however, indicates that despite the blocking of part of the gateway in the late third century (P. Blockley 1989: 130), the use of the structure continued, it now being used for metalworking (see chapter 8). At Caerwent and Silchester there is some structural evidence for blocked gates (e.g. Ashby 1906: 111–2; G. Fox and St. John Hope 1894: 237) as there also is at Colchester with the Balcerne Gate (P. Crummy 1984: 122–3).

Rather than being signs of the decline of order and civilisation, the alterations to gates represent changes in the organisation of space, and as such are similar to changes to monumental arches, porticoes and colonnades: certainly at all of these towns there is still considerable evidence for activity at the time of the changes in the late third and fourth centuries.

Town	Gate	Evidence for blocking	Date	References
Caerwent	South Gate	Blocking with a well-built and mortared stone face.	Late 3rdC.	Ashby 1906: 111–2
	North Gate	Blocked when the gate was already ruinous and included reused material.	4thC. to 5thC.	Ashby <i>et al.</i> 1904: 92
Canterbury	Ridigate	South carriageway blocked and the space used for metalworking.	Late 4thC.	K. Blockley 1986; P. Blockley 1989: 130
Colchester	Balcerne Gate	Demolition of the monumental arch along with part of the northern footway and then the construction of a thick wall filling the gap.	Uncertain but probably late Roman.	P. Crummy 1984: 122–3
Silchester	South Gate	Rubble found between the in-turns of the gate.	Uncertain	Fulford 1984: 75
	South-East Gate	The rear face of the blocking	Uncertain but	Fulford 1984: 76

		within the gate has survived and indicates courses of flints and <i>tegulae</i> .	probably late Roman.	
	West Gate	Fragments of stonework were found by the West Gate especially associated with the south carriageway.	4thC. to 5thC.	G. Fox and St. John Hope 1890: 756–7; Fulford 1984: 75
Verulamium	Chester Gate	A thick layer of burnt material containing roof-tile suggesting a partial destruction of the gate.	Late 4thC.	Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 70
	London Gate	Extensively robbed.	4thC.	Wheeler and Wheeler 1936: 66–7

Table 7.7 Details of the town gates known to have been blocked or demolished in the late Roman period.

7.12 Statues

Another way in which space was organised was by the placement of statues around and within public buildings and towns. Very few are known in Britain although there may originally have been many more (table 7.8). Remains of statue bases have been found within the *fora* at Silchester, Wroxeter, Verulamium, Chichester and Gloucester (Atkinson 1942: 104–6; Down and Rule 1971: 3; Down 1988: 31; Fulford and Timby 2000: 55–6; Frere 1983; Hurst 1999b: 158) and the *principia* at York (Roskams 1996: 269). Pieces of bronze statuary have come from public buildings in Cirencester, Gloucester and Silchester, probably indicating that they were recycled in metalworking activities (see sections 8.4.1 and 8.4.2). Their removal may represent a change to the Classical order of towns (cf. MacDonald 1986) but also implies new priorities and uses of the buildings at this time.

Town	Public Building	Evidence	Date	References
Chichester	<i>Forum-Basilica</i>	The base of a possible statue or column of Jupiter was found within	Possibly 3rdC.	Down and Rule 1971: 3; Down 1988: 31

		the location of the <i>forum</i> .		
Cirencester	<i>Forum-Basilica</i>	A bronze eye from a statue was found in the 19thC. and may represent a statue that was cut up in the 4thC.	Uncertain	Holbrook 1998: 108–9
Gloucester	<i>Forum-Basilica</i>	On the east side of the courtyard was a substantial base (c. 4x3m) of finely-cut oolitic limestone blocks joined by anathyrosis. The base had been rebuilt with reused material in the late Roman period suggesting that the statue may have remained in place to a late date. Cut up fragments of a bronze statue were also found in the locality.	Early 2ndC. onwards	Hurst 1999b: 158
Lincoln	<i>Pre-forum-basilica</i> temple?	Evidence for statue bases on a paved floor.	1stC.	M. Jones 1999: 169–70
Silchester	<i>Forum-Basilica</i>	Remains of a brick foundation set on the gravelled surface in the <i>forum</i> . This may have been an altar base instead.	1stC.	Fulford and Timby 2000: 55–6
	<i>Forum-Basilica</i>	Bronze statue fragments were found within the <i>basilica</i> .	3rdC. to 4thC.	Fulford and Timby 2000: 72
Verulamium	<i>Forum-Basilica</i>	Statue base or podium.	1stC.	Frere 1983; Niblett 2005a: 82
Wroxeter	<i>Forum-Basilica</i>	Statue bases within the <i>forum</i> .	2ndC.	Atkinson 1942: 104–6
	Temple	Collection of bronze fragments including pieces of statue.	Late 4thC. to 5thC.	Bushe-Fox 1914: 2–9
York	<i>Principia</i>	Evidence of pedestals for statues.	Late 4thC.	Roskams 1996: 269

Table 7.8 Details of the known evidence for statues placed within the *forum-basilica* complexes of the towns of Roman Britain with some additional information from other buildings.

7.13 Timber phases of public buildings

In some cases timber phases of public buildings have been recognised in the early stages of towns. This includes the site of the *basilica* at Silchester (Fulford and Timby 2000: 44–58) and some amphitheatres, theatres, *macella* and *mansiones* (see table 7.9). Traces of timber

structures of more uncertain nature have been found beneath the *forum-basilica* complexes at London (Philp 1977: 7–16), Winchester (Biddle 1966: 320) and Lincoln (M. Jones and Gilmour 1980: 66). These structures demonstrate that much remains unknown about the development of Roman towns and the biographies of public buildings. They also raise issues of how to interpret the public buildings of the late Roman period where there are traces of timber structures (as explored in detail in chapter 9). Timber structures were also often parts of these sites in the late pre-Roman Iron Age (see chapter 5). This long-term use of timber indicates that such structures need not have been considered less significant than stone buildings and could have had important uses.

Town	Public Building	Date	Reference
Caerwent	Beneath the temple were traces of a timber building around 16x10m but its function is uncertain.	The date is difficult to establish but it was possibly built in the late 1stC./early 2ndC. AD.	Brewer 1993: 58
Canterbury	The portico excavated on the Marlowe Car Park site was built over a timber structure which seems to have been of the same alignment.	Dates to the 1stC. AD.	K. Blockley <i>et al.</i> 1995: 98
	A timber structure was identified under the stone 'temple' at Burgate Street. The timber structure seems to have been built on a previously unoccupied site.	Built c. AD 200	Frere and Stow 1983: 43
Chelmsford	A timber structure, possibly also a <i>mansio</i> , preceded the stone <i>mansio</i> structure.	Built c. AD 125 but was replaced in stone soon after c. AD 130–5	Drury 1988: 25
Colchester	The earliest phase of the theatre at Gosbecks was in timber.	Built c. AD 100 and replaced c. AD 150–200	Dunnett 1971: 31–43; Hull 1958: 269
Gloucester	Beneath the masonry ' <i>macellum</i> ' excavated at Northgate Street were post-holes of a timber building and verandah.	Built in the 1stC. AD.	Rhodes 1974: 31
	Timber building underlying the 'temple' excavated at Northgate Street; evidence consisted of a sill-beam and pebble floor.	Building in the 1stC. AD.	Hurst 1972: 63

Leicester	Traces of a timber building were found beneath the <i>macella</i> although little is known about the structure.	Built in the 1stC. AD.	Wacher 1959: 113–4
Lincoln	Traces of a timber building under the <i>forum-basilica</i> may represent an early timber phase of the building or possibly an early timber temple. The plan suggests that building had a corridor or verandah along its east side.	1stC.: late Flavian/early Trajanic	M. Jones and Gilmour 1980: 66
London	Traces of timber structures on the site of the later <i>forum</i> .	Built c. AD 44–60	Philp 1977: 7–16
	The amphitheatre was first built in timber. This mainly survives as post-holes, robbed-slots and waterlogged timbers.	Built c. AD 70 and replaced by the stone structure c. AD 120	Bateman 1997: 53–54, 67; Bateman 1998: 52–53; Bateman 2000: 39
	A building 19x11m with timber and brick-earth walls on gravel and mortar foundations was excavated at 5–12 Fenchurch Street close to the <i>forum</i> . The structure had two aisles divided into rooms by partitions some of which contained hearths.	Built 1stC. AD but demolished by the mid-2ndC.	Perring 1991a: 35–6
Silchester	A timber <i>forum-basilica</i> was found beneath the stone structure. The <i>basilica</i> comprised a hall divided into two by an entrance onto the <i>forum</i> . The hall also contained a nave flanked by aisles.	Built c. AD 85	Fulford and Timby 2000: 44–58
	A timber structure of uncertain nature lay beneath the ‘church’ building.	Uncertain date but possibly 3rdC.	Frere 1975: 292
	The amphitheatre was first built in timber.	Built c. AD 75 and replaced by stone in the mid-3rdC. AD.	Fulford 1989: 13–27
Verulamium	The theatre was first built in timber.	Built c. AD 160	Kenyon 1935: 215
	Traces of timber buildings were found beneath the <i>macellum</i> but of an uncertain nature	Destroyed by the Boudican fire c. AD 60/1	Richardson 1944: 84
Winchester	Traces of timber buildings were found beneath the <i>forum-basilica</i> .	Built in the 1stC. AD.	Biddle 1966: 320; Biddle 1969: 314

Table 7.9 Details of the known timber phases of public buildings before they were built in stone.

7.14 Discussion

Early studies of Roman public buildings, such as the Victorian work at Silchester, placed emphasis on the design and monumentality of surviving architectural evidence rather than the biography of the buildings and their use. Through developing excavation techniques and theoretical approaches, a more recent approach has been to demonstrate the significance of the buildings, and their relationship with the wider landscape. Analysis of their locations within the towns and the way in which they had an impact upon movement and visual experiences is also important. But this could also include features of the landscape that remained significant from pre-Roman times including rivers, wetlands and earthworks. The religious use of space continued throughout the Roman period and received further emphasis.

Movement within public buildings was often regulated through particular routes and rights of access. Different activities within the buildings in the late Roman period will have altered such organisation. Of the public buildings for which structural evidence exists, fifty-eight were at least partly standing into the late fourth or fifth centuries (see Figure 7.7), and many survived beyond this. Only six are known certainly to have been completely demolished or destroyed at an earlier date. In the late fourth century and beyond, towns continued to contain monumental buildings that would have formed foci of attention and activity.

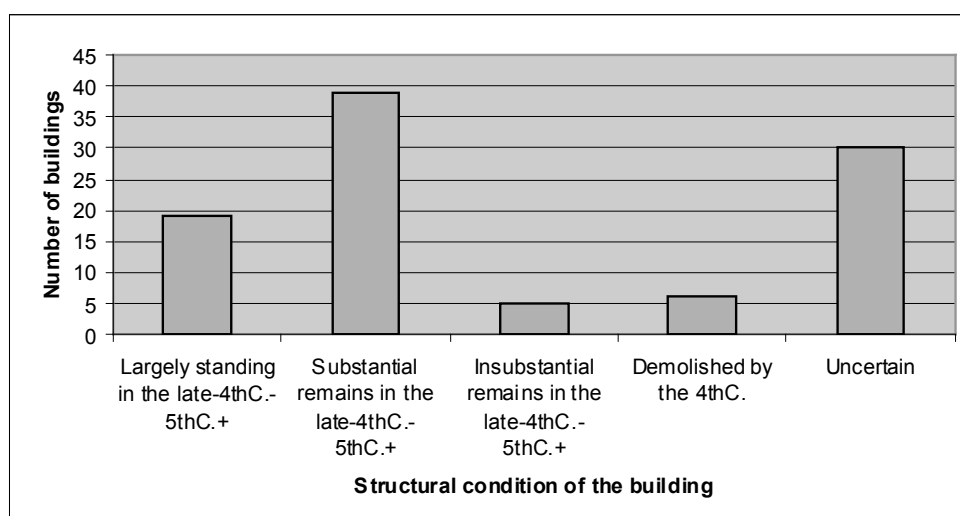


Figure 7.7 Graph showing the number of all the public building types where at least part of the building remained standing into the later fourth century and beyond.

In Britain it appears that part of the function of the *basilica* was to house the *curia*. However, the *curia*, the focus of local government in the early Empire, need not necessarily have met within public buildings in the late Roman period: instead smaller structures or sometimes even open spaces (drawing on more ancient practices) are possible venues. Wickham (2005: 597) has argued that it was during the fifth and sixth centuries that the role of the *curia* in running towns and raising taxes across what had been the Roman Empire reduced and ended. Civic officers became less prominent and local senators and bishops took a more central role. During the fourth and early fifth centuries, however, *curiae* are still considered to have been prominent entities within the town. With little documentary or epigraphic evidence from Britain it is difficult to judge whether the *curiae* were still in operation. Simply looking at the architectural evidence has led to negative conclusions (e.g. Faulkner 2000a) but the absence of a fully-functioning *curia* need not indicate the decline of a town. At Wroxeter (R. White and Barker 1998), for example, it has been suggested that the community was led by individual leaders in the late to post-Roman periods.

The insertion of a new hypocaust into the southern ambulatory of the west wing of the *basilica* at Silchester might indicate at least one area that continued to be used as offices (Fulford and Timby 2000: 75), as might the alterations to the *forum-basilica* at Cirencester. The survival of the apse of the *basilica* in London also might indicate the continuity of official use (Brigham 1992: 94–5) as might the survival of the ‘Mint Wall’ at Lincoln. There were also opportunities for other types of public building, including bathhouses, to be used as *curiae* in the late Roman period, and Reece’s (pers. comm.) analysis of the temple entrance hall next to the *basilica* at Caerwent suggests that it may have taken over the role of *curia*. If there were continuing *curiae* into the late fourth and possibly fifth centuries, then evidence for structural changes to public buildings need not be an accurate reflection of declining towns.

J.D. Hill has suggested (pers. comm.) that the continued visual impact of these structures in the surrounding landscape will have been an important element of the surviving significance of these places. This would be true regardless of whether the buildings continued to be maintained or whether some parts had been demolished. The demolition of parts of the buildings may well even have been aimed at the preservation of other sections. The process of demolition takes much effort, time, organisation and resources and so was a very deliberate and considered act. Selected demolition can be viewed in terms of continued vitality and even as an act of regeneration in the town centres. Similarly, Revell (1999) argues that fires within public buildings were important stages in the life of the buildings - they allowed renewal and should not be viewed in terms of crisis or decay. It could be argued that some monumental buildings continued to exist because they were too much trouble to demolish but whilst they remained standing they could continue to be important structures within the towns and put to use.

It is now difficult to determine the appearance of the structures by the late Roman period – in some cases it may have been quite different from the original designs. These changes, however, were meaningful stages in the biographies of the buildings: viewing buildings in static terms, in their newly built forms, misses the long sequences of alterations and additions that constituted the life of the buildings (cf. Revell 1999). The majority of the buildings did, of course, disappear by the early post-Roman period through structural decay, demolition and stone robbing, although some survived longer, influencing locations of churches and forms of settlement in the medieval period (Bell 2005). The spaces remained important beyond the structural maintenance of the buildings and reduction of economic activity within towns. In E. Casey's words (1996: 121): 'there are no places without the bodies that sustain them...(and) there are no lived bodies without the places they inhabit and traverse'. The analysis of evidence for activities within the buildings, conducted by the bodies, will begin with an examination of 'industrial' activity which, it will be argued cannot be taken simply to

represent declining standards but was symbolic of the continued significance of the sites and even of generation and vitality.