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Rescue statement on Dee House, Chester

Whilst Rescue laments the damage done to the Roman amphitheatre at Chester during the construction of Dee House in the 18th century, we recognise that the historic environment is the result of successive human actions. We take the view that as the process of archaeological excavation destroys the original evidence (even if replacing it with a full record) it should only be carried out if the returns on the information to be gained will outweigh that harm. In this particular case, we believe that the additional information to be gained from the exposure of part of the Roman amphitheatre is very likely to be minimal and would not justify the demolition of the Listed 18th century property which currently occupies the site and forms part of its history. Both are designated Heritage Assets and that one is 'at risk' does not imply that it can be sacrificed for the other. We ask those who have responsibility for the building and the archaeological remains sealed beneath it to respect their historical value and to secure their future in such a way as to preserve their integrity and maximise the public value.

Jude Plouviez, Chair

RESCUE is a non-political organisation dedicated to supporting archaeology and archaeologists in Britain and abroad (www.rescue-archaeology.org.uk). We do not receive any state support and are entirely dependent on the contributions of our members to support our work.