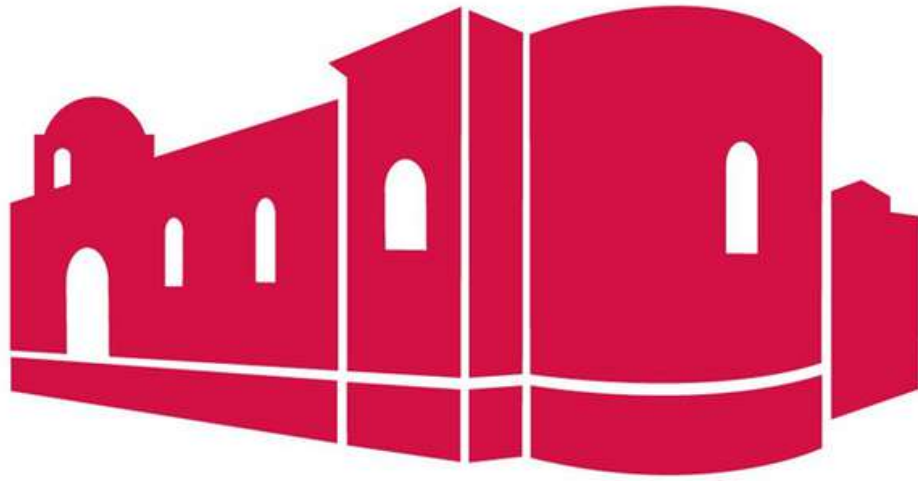




Colchester Castle

Accessibility Guide

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[https://colchester.cimuseums.org.uk/
visit/colchester-castle/](https://colchester.cimuseums.org.uk/visit/colchester-castle/)



Welcome

Watch the video: **Colchester Castle Visual Story Film**

Colchester Castle is the oldest Norman keep in Europe. The museum features interactive displays and star exhibits, like the Colchester Gladiator Vase and Fenwick Hoard of Roman treasure.

Visitors can try building a Norman archway, dressing as an Iron Age Briton, steering a Roman chariot, or even firing our replica ballista.

Daily tours, led by expert guides, can take you down into the Roman vaults and onto the Castle roof.

We hope to make our venue as welcoming as possible, but unfortunately, not all our spaces are fully accessible. Please feel free to get in touch with us for further information or if you need help planning your visit.

At a Glance

Access with Steps

There are steps from the main entrance to areas covered by our Castle tour.

Level Access

The main entrance has level access with a ramp. The ramp is permanent. There is level access from the main entrance to the following areas:

Ground Floor

Welcome Desk

Accessible Toilet with Sliding Door

Accessible Toilet with Hinged Door

Castle Shop

Lunchroom

Castle Park

Ground Floor Galleries

First Floor

First Floor Galleries

Chapel

Charles Grey Room

A photograph showing the Welcome Desk. The desk is mostly below waist height and the Castle Shop is to the right.



At a Glance

Hearing

Fire Alarm: Equipped with flashing lights for visual cues.

Hearing Loop: Available at the Welcome Desk and in the Charles Grey Room.

Portable Mic for Tours: Tour guides can carry a portable microphone to assist visitors with hearing impairments. Receivers are available upon request when purchasing tour tickets.

Staff Training: Some staff members are trained in British Sign Language (BSL) and have disability awareness training.

A photograph showing the open area in front of the Castle Welcome Desk.



At a Glance

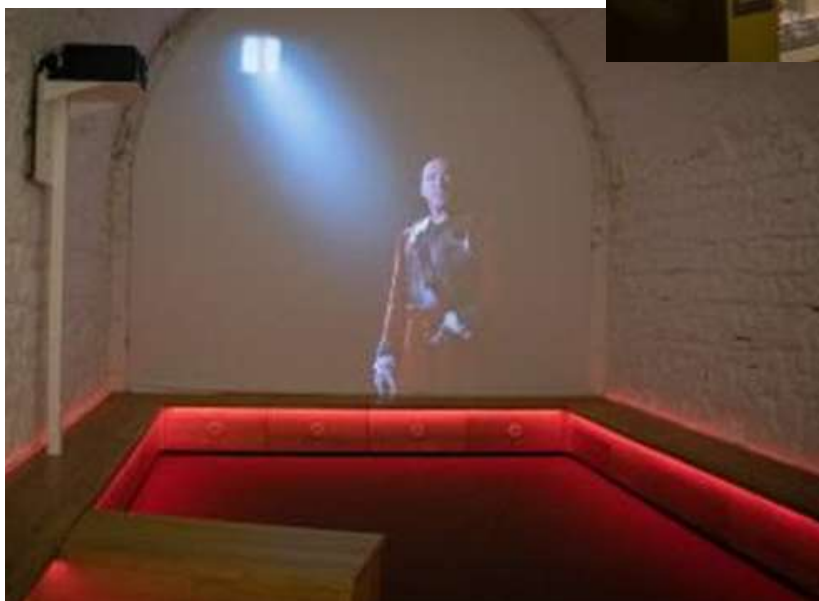
Visual Accessibility

Lighting: Some areas of the venue have low lighting to accommodate different needs.

Information Accessibility: Display information is available in audio, braille, and BSL formats.

Braille Information: Additional resources are available in braille.

A photograph showing the ground floor of Colchester Castle. The lighting is on, and the inside of the cases are lit.



A photograph of the Lucas Vault room, which is dark with a projection on the back wall and low-level lighting.

At a Glance

General Accessibility

Concessionary Rates: Discounted rates are available for disabled visitors. Personal assistants receive complimentary tickets.

Facilities: At least one public toilet is accessible to disabled visitors.

Staff Training: Additional staff members have received disability awareness training.



A photo of dark red vinyl lettering against a white wall, signposting visitors to the Prisons and baby changing facilities.

Getting Here

Travel by Bus

The nearest bus stops are located on Colchester High Street, just past the town hall, approximately 0.1 miles (0.2 km) from Colchester Castle.

Colchester Castle
Castle Park
Colchester
CO1 1TJ

A photograph of Colchester High Street. On the left side is an area for buses to pull in and a line of bus stops.



A photograph showing the Colchester War Memorial next to the park gates, with a road that has a drop curb looping around it.

Getting Here

Travel by Train

Colchester Town Station is approximately 0.4 miles (0.6 km) from Colchester Castle, and it is reachable via a short walk down Queen Street.

**Colchester Castle
Castle Park
Colchester
CO1 1TJ**

Colchester North Station is about 1 mile away and involves a steep hill. This station has frequent services, typically three trains per hour to Colchester Town Station, along with various bus services.



A photograph of Colchester Town Station.

A photograph shows Museum Street, from High Street to Castle Park. The Castle is visible at the end of the road.



Getting Here

Travel by Taxi

Many taxis in Colchester are wheelchair accessible and can be booked through local companies. We recommend that you call in advance to check vehicle availability and suitability.

**Colchester Castle
Castle Park
Colchester
CO1 1TJ**

Taxis can drop passengers off at the Colchester War Memorial, the park gates at the end of Museum Street, or the end of Colchester High Street.

Taxis with Wheelchair Access

MCS Minicab Services: Call 01206 544444.

Taxinow: Call 01206 801801.

AB Taxis: Call 01206 701701.

A photograph of the gates into Castle Park nearest the Castle. There are three walkways, the middle of which is about 2m wide.



Getting Here

Travel by Car

A drop-off point is at the main entrance with a dropped kerb for easier access. Additional drop-off points include the Colchester War Memorial or at the end of Colchester High Street.

**Colchester Castle
Castle Park
Colchester
CO1 1TJ**

Blue Badge Parking

There are 11 spaces for blue badge holders outside the Castle Park gates on Museum Street, approximately 100-200m from the museum entrance.

Note: There is a 3-hour parking limit between 8am and 6pm.

Additional parking is available slightly further away on the High Street.



A photograph of the blue badge parking bays outside Castle Park. Colchester Castle is visible on the other side of the fence.

Arrival

Path to the Main Entrance

Access

From the street to the main entrance, there is level access.

Width

The path is at least 1400mm wide.

A photograph showing the foot bridge leading up to the entrance to Colchester Castle. The floor is flat with fencing either side.



A photograph showing the back of Colchester Castle and the gravel path that extends all the way around.

Arrival

Main Entrance Details

Access

The main entrance is accessible via level access with a permanent ramp. The main door is a sliding, automatic type, 1930mm wide.

Entry Route

Visitors enter the Castle via a flat bridge. The initial interior flooring consists of large, slightly uneven stones extending approximately 8 meters. Beyond this area is a smooth, very slight ramp leading into the main museum area, which is carpeted.

Door Details

The exterior doors will be held open when the Museum is open to the public. These doors are 2040mm wide. The interior doors are glass and motion-sensitive.

They may be closed in winter and held open during summer.

These doors are 1930mm.

A photograph showing the area just inside the Castle entrance. It has a stone floor leading to a smooth, low ramp.



Getting Around Inside

Lift Access at Colchester Castle

General Information

There are two lifts available. The lifts provide access to select floors within the museum.

Glass Platform Lift

Dimensions: The lift door is 900mm wide, with the lift measuring 950mm in width and 1250mm in depth.

The door to the glass platform lift on the ground floor. The inside of the lift is lit up.

Capacity and Safety: The lift can hold up to 4 people. An adult must accompany children. Users must stand clear of the glass, staying within lines marked by

yellow and black tape. The lift will stop if these boundaries are crossed and can be restarted by stepping away and pressing the up/down button.



Getting Around Inside

Lift Access at Colchester Castle

Glass Platform Lift

Location and Exit: Located in the museum's centre toward the back wall. Users exit on the first floor at the Iron Age Round House, which is recommended as the starting point for visiting the Castle.

Interactive Features: The lift announces the floor number at each stop, has buttons with raised numbers or letters, and displays the floor number visibly.

A photograph of the glass platform lift showing a visitor inside and moving between the ground and first floors.



A photo of the user instructions inside the Glass Platform Lift.

Getting Around Inside

Lift Access at Colchester Castle

Enclosed Lift

Dimensions: The lift door is 790mm wide, with the lift measuring 1050mm in width and 1350mm in depth.

Location and Path: Accessible from the welcome desk through an arched doorway in the far-right corner and along a short corridor past the toilets.

Exit: Visitors exit into the Roman Heyday gallery on the first floor.

Interactive Features: Similar to the glass platform lift, this lift also announces the floor number, has buttons with raised numbers or letters, and displays the floor number visibly at each floor.

A photograph of the door to the enclosed lift from the ground floor.



Getting Around Inside

Welcome Desk and Visitor Services

Welcome Desk Accessibility

Level access from the main entrance to the Welcome Desk is available, with a route that is 1920mm wide or more. The Welcome Desk includes a low section designed for accessibility, which is 730mm high.

Services Provided

The Welcome desk serves multiple functions, including ticket sales for admission and shop purchases. Visitors may need to queue before being served, especially during peak times.

Things to See and Do

Concessionary Rates: Discounted rates are available for disabled visitors.

Complementary Tickets: Personal assistants receive complimentary tickets to assist in making the visit more accessible.

Display Information: Information is available in multiple accessible formats, including audio, braille, and British Sign Language (BSL).

Getting Around Inside

Ground Floor

Access and Navigation

Entrance and Route: There is level access from the main entrance to the ground floor, with the route being 1600mm wide or more.

Seating and Displays: Seats are available throughout, and some display information is low to accommodate wheelchair users.

Display cases
dividing up the
ground floor
space.



Exhibits and Interactivity

Displays: The ground floor features exhibits about Colchester Castle, the Saxons, Normans, the Medieval period, and the Siege of Colchester, including the Castle prisons.

Navigation: There are multiple routes around the displays, with wide walkways between them to facilitate movement.

Getting Around Inside

Ground Floor

Audio-Visual Access

Tactile and Braille Information: Tactile information boards and braille signage are available, along with replica objects throughout the gallery that visitors can touch.

Digital Interactives: Digital screens include audio features, and videos are equipped with subtitles and, in some cases, British Sign Language (BSL).

Hearing Loop: A hearing loop is available in the Welcome Desk area.



A display of objects related to the Siege of Colchester.



An example of a replica, animal shaped jug with a sign saying 'Please touch.'

Getting Around Inside

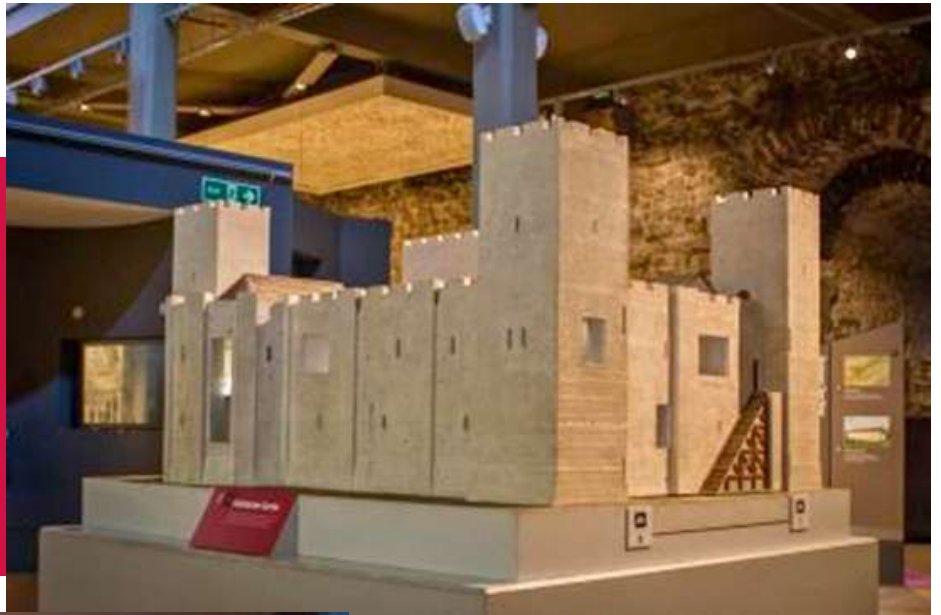
Ground Floor

Additional Services

Quiet Space: While no designated quiet space exists, visitors requiring a quieter area are encouraged to speak to the Visitor Services team.

Information Updates: As displays may change due to seasonal events or temporary exhibitions, visitors should check the Colchester Museums website for the latest information.

A replica model of Colchester Castle is in the middle of the gallery. Visitors can look through the windows.



A view of a seated area facing a television screen where visitors can watch interviews with modern soldiers.

Getting Around Inside

Ground Floor

Inside the Castle prisons which have wooden walls and a projection playing in the cells.



The space leading to the prisons, which contains stocks.

Getting Around Inside

First Floor

Access and Navigation

Lift Access: There is level access from the main entrance to the first floor, facilitated by a lift. The route from the lift to this area is at least 920mm wide, with the door width also being 920mm.

Seating and Displays: Seats are available throughout, and some display information is positioned low to accommodate wheelchair users.

The view from the first-floor balcony looking out over the ground floor.



Display cases of pottery and metal.

Getting Around Inside

First Floor

Exhibits and Interactivity

Displays: The first floor hosts displays about the rise and fall of the Roman Empire and the Chapel. Visitors are advised to start at the replica Iron Age roundhouse at the top of the stairs or as they exit the glass lift, following an anti-clockwise path for a roughly chronological experience.

Navigation: Multiple routes are available around the display cases, with wide walkways between them to facilitate movement.

The replica Iron Age roundhouse, which is a semicircular structure with a pitched roof and pots on the floor.



A film projected on a screen raised above head height. Below it is a scale model of a temple.

Getting Around Inside

First Floor

Audio-Visual Accessibility

Tactile and Braille Information: Tactile information boards and signage in braille are available, along with replica objects throughout the gallery that can be touched.

Digital Interactives: Digital screens include audio features, and videos are equipped with subtitles and, in some cases, British Sign Language (BSL).

Hearing Loop: A hearing loop is available in the Charles Grey Room, primarily used by school groups during term time and for events.

Visitors watch a large-scale animation projected on one of the interior walls of the Castle.



The Charles Grey Room, which is a large open space that can be set up for different events

Getting Around Inside

First Floor

Additional Services and Uses

Chapel: The Chapel is used by school groups during term time and may be set up for wedding ceremonies.

Information Updates: As displays may change due to seasonal events or temporary exhibitions, visitors are recommended to check the Colchester Museums website for the latest information.

An example of a digital display screen. Visitors can touch it to hear about Roman life.



The Castle Chapel, which has high ceilings and white walls.

Getting Around Inside

First Floor

Display cases of pottery in between a large fireplace and a wall mounted mosaic.



The interactive chariot game where visitors drive virtual horses using real reins.

Getting Around Inside

Castle Tour Accessibility Overview

Tour Route and Accessibility Challenges

Initial Access: From the main entrance to the tour start, there are 21 steps, and no lift or ramp is available.

Roman Vaults: Access to the Roman vaults is via a stone staircase with 21 irregular and uneven steps, equipped with rails on either side.

Looking up the stone steps from the Castle vaults.



A view of one of the low tunnels connecting the vaults under Colchester Castle.

Getting Around Inside

Castle Tour Accessibility Overview

Tour Route and Accessibility Challenges

Vault Interior: Inside the vaults, the spaces are large but connected by short, low tunnels. The floor is carpeted but uneven in some places, and bench seating is available in areas where the tour guide will stop. The atmosphere may be cool with a noticeable smell from the surrounding stone.



Inside one of the vaults under Colchester Castle. The room is arched with stone walls.

Getting Around Inside

Castle Tour Accessibility Overview

Tour Route and Accessibility Challenges

Roof Access: After returning to the ground floor, the tour includes a climb to the roof via a spiral staircase. Beginning with a slight ramp, the staircase encompasses 47 steep and uneven steps. The safest walking path is near the outer edge, where a handrail is available. Halfway up, there is a gate with a width of 970mm.



A view from the roof of Colchester Castle looking out at the trees in Castle Park.

Part of the walkway on the castle roof that is outside. The walkway leads to a door into the Castle.



Getting Around Inside

Castle Tour Accessibility Overview

Tour Route and Accessibility Challenges

Roof Pathway: The roof pathway is flat with some steps up and down, and a rail is in place to prevent proximity to the edge.

The spiral stone staircase leading to the Castle roof. There is a red rope handrail around the outer wall.



Part of the walkway on the castle roof that is inside. There is a rope handrail along one side.

Getting Around Inside

Castle Tour Accessibility Overview

Tour Route and Accessibility Challenges

Descent: The tour concludes with a descent down one storey via a set of stone stairs involving 7 steps over a low wall, leading to the first-floor galleries.

Additional Accessibility Information

Seating: Available at various points along the tour, particularly in the Roman vaults.

Visual Accessibility: Videos shown during the tour include subtitles.

Display Information: Some display information is low and accessible for wheelchair users.



The steps at the end of the Castle tour that lead to the first floor galleries.

Getting Around Inside

Public Toilet

Accessible Toilet with Sliding Door

The public toilet for disabled visitors is located with level access from the main entrance, facilitated by a permanent ramp.

The route to the toilet is at least 1040mm wide, ensuring ample space for mobility aids.

A photograph of the accessible toilet, showing the toilet seat, sink and hand drier.



Toilet Specifications

Door Width: The sliding door of the toilet is 800mm wide.

Toilet Height: The toilet seat is 450mm high.

Transfer Direction: The transfer direction onto the toilet is to the left.

Space Around Toilet: There is 800mm of space at the side of the toilet and 1400mm in front, providing sufficient room for maneuvering.

Handrails: Handrails are installed for additional support and safety.

Getting Around Inside

Public Toilet

Accessible Toilet with Hinged Door

The public toilet for disabled visitors is located with level access from the main entrance, facilitated by a permanent ramp.

The route to the toilet is at least 1040mm wide, ensuring ample space for mobility aids.

A photograph of the accessible toilet, showing the toilet seat, sink, hand drier and baby changing table.



Toilet Specifications

Toilet Height: The toilet seat is 410mm high.

Transfer Direction: The transfer direction onto the toilet is to the right.

Door Type and Width: The toilet features a hinged door that is 830mm wide.

Space Around Toilet: There is 660mm of space at the side of the toilet and 1360mm in front, aiding in accessibility.

Handrails: Handrails are installed for additional support and safety.

Getting Around Inside

Castle Shop

Access and Navigation

There is level access from the main entrance to the shop, and the route is 1200mm wide or more. The internal route through the shop is at least 800mm wide, accommodating various mobility needs.

Shop Features and Location

The Castle Shop is conveniently located next to the Welcome area. It features shelves and freestanding display units stocked with a variety of products including magnets, keyrings, pens, books, cushions, and replica pots. A closed display case showcases different jewellery items.

Many items on sale are themed around Romans or Castles, with frequent updates to link to the season, temporary exhibitions, or displays.

Inside the Castle Shop, which has shelves and display units full of products.



Shop Entries

Visitors can enter the shop near the main front door or after passing the Siege display. The narrowest entry point, by the Siege display, is 1200mm wide.

Getting Around Inside

Castle Lunchroom

Access and Navigation

From the main entrance to the lunchroom, level access is facilitated by a permanent ramp. The route to the lunchroom is at least 1040mm wide, ensuring accessibility for various mobility aids. The entrance door to the lunchroom is also 1040mm wide.

Seating Options

Various seating options are available, including bench seating, stools, and chairs with armrests, catering to different comfort preferences.

The Castle lunchroom has large tables with benches and stools to sit on. There is a cold and hot drinks machine.



Usage

This space is a designated area where visitors can eat and drink refreshments, either brought from home or purchased from the vending machines or the fridge by the Welcome Desk.

School Use: The lunchroom is utilised by school groups on weekdays during term time until approximately 2 pm, making it a busy spot during these hours.

General Quiet Times: Outside of these hours, the space is typically quiet, providing a more relaxed environment.

Getting Around Outside

Castle Park

A photograph of the Cafe in the Park. There is a takeaway window, outdoor seating and a door leading to indoor seating.



Access

Level access to the gardens from the main entrance is enhanced by a permanent ramp. The route through the gardens is at least 1920mm wide.

A view of Hollytrees Museum from the sensory garden, which is to the right as you exit the building.



Colchester's Castle Park is a large public park. Within a short distance of Colchester Castle is a sensory garden, children's play area, fishpond, bandstand, cafe, public toilets, and Hollytrees Museum. Further away, in Lower Castle Park, is a boating lake.

There are step-free routes and benches throughout the park.

Getting Around Outside

Castle Park, Continued

Picnic Area

You can bring your own food to the picnic area.

Castle Park does not have a dedicated picnic area, but there are numerous benches surrounding the Castle and throughout the park.

A photograph of some of the decorative flower beds inside Castle Park.



A photograph showing one of the interpretation panels outside of the Castle and the ruins of the Castle bailey

Getting Around Outside

Castle Park, Continued

A photograph of the Castle Park bandstand. In front of it is a wide path lined with benches.



A view of the path alongside Colchester Castle, which is lined with benches.

Customer Care Support

Accessibility Equipment

Wheelchairs: Free wheelchairs are available for visitors.

Hearing Assistance: A hearing loop is installed at the Welcome desk and in the Charles Grey Room. Portable microphones are available with tour guides to assist visitors with hearing impairments, and receivers can be requested at the Welcome desk when purchasing tour tickets.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Tailored emergency evacuation procedures are in place for disabled visitors.

The fire alarm system includes flashing lights to alert visitors who are deaf or hard of hearing.



A photograph showing a Hidden Disabilities card and lanyard being worn by a person in a striped top.

Customer Care Support

Staff Training and Resources

Disability Awareness: Many staff members have received training based on the social model of disability, and our Access Champions team has undergone more detailed training.

Sign Language: Some staff have British Sign Language (BSL) training, and many Visitor Services team members are trained in basic BSL.

Braille Information: Information is available in braille for visually impaired visitors.



A photograph of a display about building materials which includes text and braille.

A photograph of a pair of hands holding a replica oil lamp.



Customer Care Support

Additional Services

Accessibility Tools: Twiddle Muffs, Hidden Disabilities lanyards, and sheet magnifiers are available to borrow while in the museum.

Calm at the Castle Sessions: Held on the first Sunday of each month, these sessions feature switched-off noisy interactives and dedicated sensory space.

Special Events: On the second Sunday of each month, the museum hosts audio-described tours or object-handling sessions focused on different themes. Visitors are advised to check the Events page on the Colchester Museums website for updates on dates and details.

A photograph of
Twiddle Muffs
available for visitors
to borrow.

