

Exeter Medieval Trail



Exeter City Council



Medieval Exeter

Explore Exeter's Medieval Trail to discover one of the city's most turbulent periods from 1066-1500, a seesaw of dramatic changes from the construction of glorious Exeter Cathedral to the gruesome spectacle of the Black Death.

This trail explores many of the most important medieval sites in Exeter. Some can also be explored on Exeter's Woollen Trail and City Wall Trail or on a Red Coat Guided tour.



The Roman numerals on the map below highlight the locations of the key medieval sites that survive in the city today.



I Rougemont Castle

Rougemont Castle was built in 1068 as a powerful symbol of Norman control.

The imposing gatehouse is the oldest castle building of this type in Britain.



(© Tony Howell)

XI The Guildhall

Mayor and council have regulated Exeter affairs for over 800 years from England's oldest working municipal building with its fine medieval hall.



X Parish Churches

As a great ecclesiastical centre, medieval Exeter established over 30 parish churches and chapels including

St. Mary Arches and St. Mary Steps.



IX St. Nicholas Priory

Founded as a Benedictine Monastery in 1087, St. Nicholas Priory is one of

Devon's oldest buildings and boasts a superb Norman vaulted cellar.



II Merchant Houses

A number of well-preserved late medieval merchant houses show Exeter's

importance as a wealthy trade centre.



III The Cathedral Church of St. Peter

With impressive twin Norman towers and soaring Gothic vaulting, Exeter Cathedral is a masterpiece of medieval architecture.



IV Wynard's Almshouses

These 15th century almshouses housed 12 poor infirm elderly men with an adjoining chapel to care for their souls.



(© Gary Young, Exeter Archaeology)

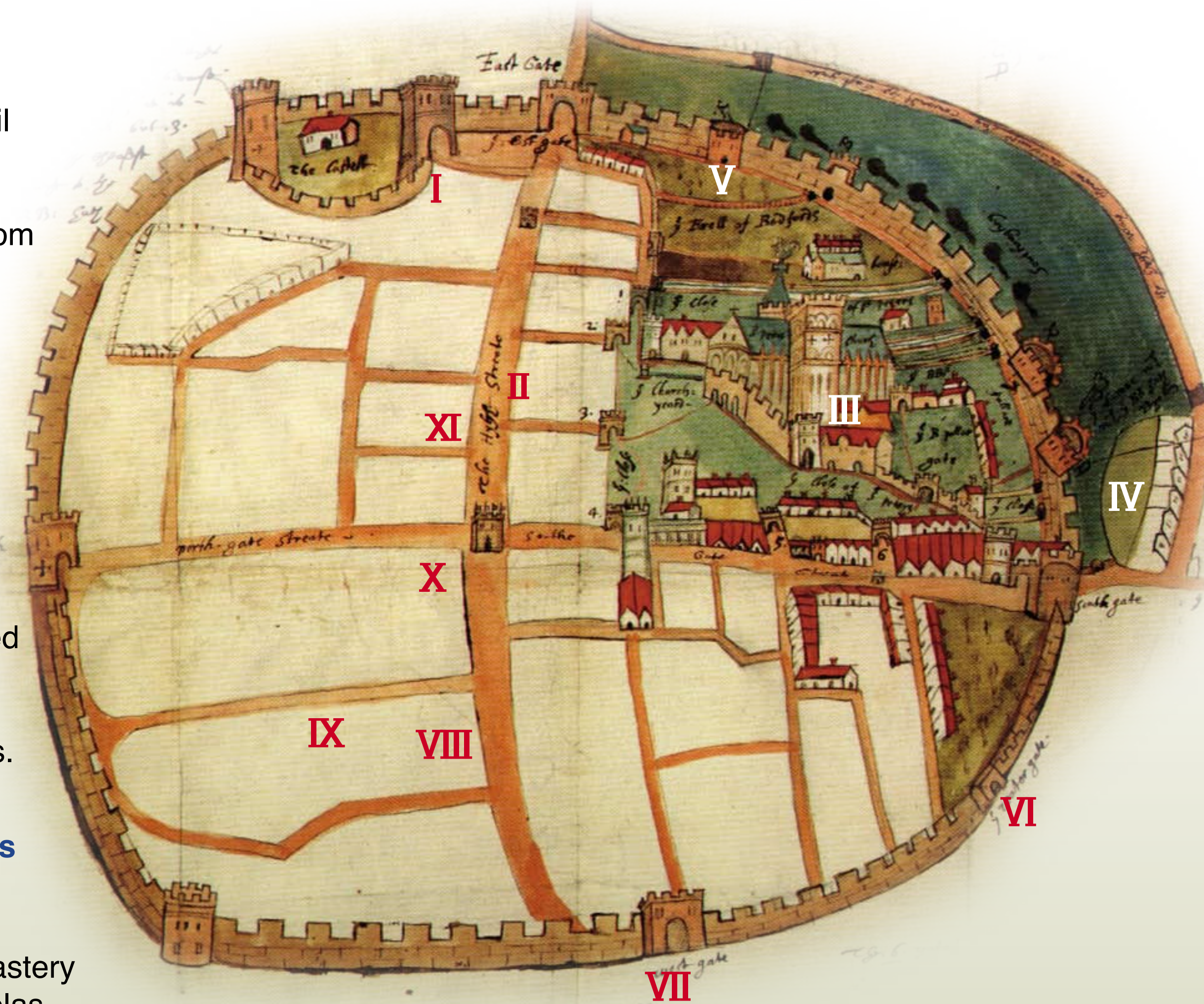
V Underground Passages

Dating from the 14th century, the Underground Passages were an ingenious medieval engineering solution to bring fresh water into the city.



VI Exe Island

Exe Island's bustling industrial quarter used water drained from the surrounding marshes to power cloth and corn mills, tanneries, dye houses and foundries.



▲ Hooker's 1622 view of Exeter. Although drawn after 1500, the street layout remains as it was throughout the medieval period. (Source: DRO, ECA, L619).



VIII Tuckers Hall

Originally built in 1471 as the Chapel for the Guild of Weavers, Fullers

and Shearmen, this Grade II listed building has a fine barrel-vaulted roof.



VII Exe Bridge

Built around 1200, Exe Bridge is the remainder of the first stone

bridge to span the River Exe. At one end stands St. Edmund's, a rare example of a bridge church.

The Normans were responsible for many of Exeter's early medieval buildings, but why are they known as 'Normans'?



Because they hailed from Normandy, in northern France.

