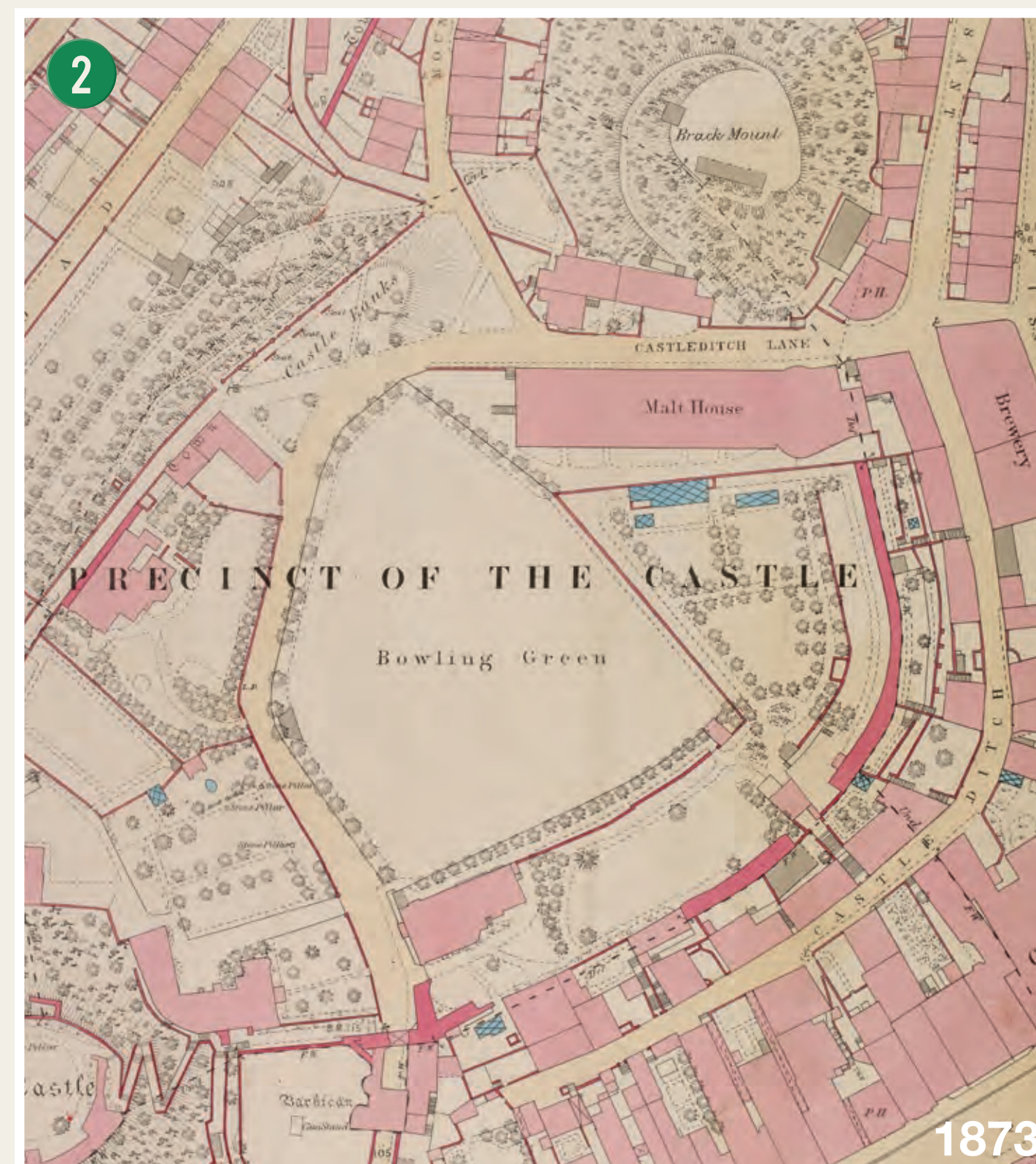


LEWES HERITAGE: GARDEN OF PEACE

This area outlined in red in the photograph, was once a part of the huge gardens of **Castlegate House 1** which stands next to the barbican. It was part of the castle's bailey or central courtyard, bounded by the old curtain wall, parts of which were in place by 1100.

It is probable that the flat area which has been a bowling green for over 250 years **2** was once a tilting ground, where mounted knights refined their skills. There are no remains of buildings in the bailey, but there may well have been living quarters at the northern side and more functional buildings at the eastern end, where you are now standing.



The gardens were created by **Frank Frankfort Moore 3** (1855 – 1931) from Northern Ireland. Initially a journalist, he was also a dramatist, biographer, novelist and poet, publishing more than 25 works.



In 1907 he visited Lewes and attended a sale of furniture in Castlegate House. He loved it so much that, compelled by what he saw as its possibilities, he bought it.

He had ambitious plans for the gardens: he constructed a small classical temple in the grounds, using various materials brought in from abroad or what you might call inventively-sourced: recycled marble mantelpieces and gravestones, for example.

The central area **4** was planned as a round arbour with arches on each side, classical stone seats and a lily pond. It was where the formal house garden led through a gate towards the walled vegetable garden and also to the steps down to Castle Ditch Lane and on out into the High Street.

Looking from the direction of the house **5** it is apparent just how much stonework Moore constructed.



Looking the other way **6** the hexagonal stones in the foreground were imported from Northern Ireland – basalt blocks from the Giant's Causeway in County Antrim.



In 1919 Moore wrote a book called *A Garden of Peace - a Medley in Quietude*, which described his development of this property and grounds and the value to him and others of a quiet reflective space. He wrote, 'I think that if ever a mortal heard the voice of God, it would be in a garden at the cool of the day.'

The Maltings to the north of the garden was built in the 1850s and in turn served two Lewes breweries. Over time, with changes of ownership, the area which had once been a garden and orchard became a public space. In 1974 the County Record Office occupied the building and the route across its car park was a much-used short-cut. Known to generations of youngsters as the 'Magic Circle', it became neglected and the condition of the area sadly deteriorated.



In this photo **7** which was a promotional shot for a local pop group in the early 1980s, it shows that then some of the stonework, including a complete arch, remained intact. It was subsequently demolished on safety grounds.

By 2000, much of this feature had been badly damaged by vandalism. Litter abounded in a space clearly uncared for and it was a spot passed through swiftly by most people.

Friends of Lewes, the town's Civic Society, sought permission from Historic England and proposed a contemporary regeneration to respect the intentions of its creator, as a Garden of Peace. Additional funding was secured from **Lewes Town Council**, **Lewes District Council** and other contributors to this environment-enhancing project. It was opened in 2019.

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