

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

ROCKINGHAM

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Funded by English Heritage

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2000

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BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

This is one of a series of reports compiled by Northamptonshire Heritage as part of the English Heritage funded Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) of Northamptonshire, which is intended to provide an effective information base and research framework to guide the management of the county's urban archaeological resource. The survey encompasses all urban settlements and others which may have had some urban attributes, from the Roman period to the 1930s. The only exception is Northampton, which is the subject of an Intensive Urban Survey in its own right.

Each report comprises three distinct sections: a detailed description of the town in each major period; an assessment of potential and definition of a research agenda; and a strategy for future management. A consistent approach has been taken in the presentation of the description in each report with detail being presented under each standard category even where this has no direct obvious relevance to the urban aspects. This section has however been presented in the form of a gazetteer with standard headings so enabling the reader to identify those sections of particular interest. This report has been prepared by Glenn Foard. Other contributions to the EUS on digital mapping, database input and related work have been made by various individuals including Christine Addison, Chris Jones, Paul Thompson, Rob Atkins and Phil Markham.

The first objective of the report is to determine layout, character and chronology of development of Rockingham from its rural Saxon origins up to the 19th century. An attempt has been made to identify the various components of the town which are likely to have left identifiable archaeological remains and, as far as practicable, to define the exact location and extent of these buried or upstanding monuments. They have also all been assessed for likely current survival and their potential to contribute to research objectives. The relationship of the town to its hinterland has also been considered and the potential for study of that interaction has been assessed. In this way the report aims to provide a well founded research framework, establishing the current state of knowledge of Rockingham's history and defining a research agenda which can guide future archaeological investigation within the town. Recording and conservation objectives have also been defined. This report should be viewed as a starting point rather than a definitive study, which it certainly is not. If this report serves its purpose then it will need to be regularly reviewed and substantially revised in future years as archaeological investigations, and hopefully also further documentary research, is undertaken.

Given the limitations of time which inevitably must guide the conduct of a countywide project it has been necessary to limit the depth of investigation. No original archaeological earthwork or other such field survey has been conducted, but all available existing archaeological data has been consulted. Mapping from aerial photographic sources in the Northamptonshire SMR, CUCAP and the NMR has been completed. Although each town has been visited to examine the topography of the town and an assessment attempted as to the general state of archaeological survival, no attempt has been made to conduct cellar survey comparable to that undertaken for Northampton as part of the Intensive Urban Survey of that town. This is due to the absence of detailed mapped evidence comparable to that which exists for Northampton and the very poor results achieved in 1979 when a cellar survey was attempted in Thrapston and Towcester. Nor has it been possible to examine all documentary

sources, even for the medieval period. However, an attempt has been made to assess the overall potential of this crucial part of the record of the urban past and to examine in detail the most documentary important sources. An index has been compiled from various list and indexes in the Public Record Office, Northamptonshire Record Office, National Register of Archives and British Library. Given the vast quantity of documentation, particularly for the last 200 years the limitations in the documentary assessment, especially regarding the industrial period must be acknowledged. Attention has focussed on those sources which might contribute significantly to the reconstruction of the historical topography of the town and to the broader characterisation of the various monuments within the town.

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SUMMARY

This report focuses on the archaeological development of Rockingham in the pre-industrial period. The post 1750 period has not been assessed in the context of this report, but this does not mean that there are no significant archaeological remains in the area.

The early development of Rockingham, in the Saxon period, does not appear particularly significant, being held at the conquest by a minor lord and the settlement itself being waste. Rockingham was a small village which became an important settlement when William created a castle there at some time between 1066 and 1086 and the castle has dominated the settlement ever since. He undoubtedly chose the village because of its strong defensive location and the control this would provide over the major road running north from London to Oakham. The king made this his main administrative centre in the area, having by 1086 already begun detaching woodland from various adjacent royal manors and attaching them to Rockingham as a royal forest, which was soon to take the name of the village. If these other manors had been significant royal residences before the conquest it seems they were superseded by the new castle, only the more distant manors of Brigstock and its 1086 dependency of Geddington and Kings Cliffe were retained as residences, and these largely as elaborate hunting lodges. Brigstock and Kings Cliffe became the centres of the other two bailiwicks of the forest during the medieval period.

Rockingham was always a tiny township, between 766 and 890 acres, and never grew into a large village although, being almost solely on permeable geologies it was probably very productive agriculturally and hence to be expected to have a higher than average population and wealth per square kilometre. However the village did grow significantly by the 14th century, well above the size one would have expected for such a small township. This must have been the result of the founding of a market in Rockingham in 1272 by the Earl of Cornwall.

Though it had acquired a fair in the early 13th century its market was not apparently granted until the later 13th century amidst the main phase of grants creating market villages in Northamptonshire. The late foundation of the market at Rockingham, when the manor was held by the Earl of Cornwall, implies a lack of interest by the crown in the promotion of Rockingham as a town, and its failure to gain truly urban status may in part be the result of the lack of effective long term seigneurial interest. It is clear that the market functioned through the late 13th and earlier 14th centuries, but it is uncertain whether the market continued to thrive through the later 14th and 15th centuries. It certainly functioned in the early 17th century and survived through to the end of the 18th century although of only minor significance. The success Rockingham's market and the associated growth of the settlement must in part have been due to the presence of the castle and to the position on a major road. However perhaps most significant was the settlements position, with access to the rich agricultural lands of the Welland valley at a point on the periphery of the market hinterlands of the more important towns of Kettering, Rothwell, Uppingham and especially Stamford.

Apart from the market and fair, Rockingham never acquired any other urban attributes other than a hermitage, which was probably founded because of the presence of major road rather than the market village, having been positioned next to the bridge over the Welland. However it is clear from the medieval taxation data that Rockingham was significantly more than just an agricultural settlement.

Rockingham is an excellent example of a small market village which had clear if modest long term commercial success. It was probably the smallest of Northamptonshire's medieval market villages and, unlike most, it also thrived in the post medieval period. Today it provides a unique combination of well preserved and high potential archaeological remains of major royal castle, probably has good surviving buried evidence for the defences of the Civil War garrison, a wholly deserted market place and extensive areas of tenements which have largely avoided disturbance since the mid 17th century. There is also a good potential throughout the rest of the settlement for other tenement evidence in front of or to the side of existing buildings. Moreover, the broad layout of the settlement is understood and there is a good documentary record to complement the archaeology. The settlement is clearly of national importance with a high research potential.

I DESCRIPTION

1.0 TOPOGRAPHY & GEOLOGY

The township lies on the steep north facing slope where the river Welland has cut through the boulder clay covered limestone plateau which dominates north east of Northamptonshire. It extends from the river itself up onto the edge of the boulder clay plateau to the south east but as the valley at Rockingham is particularly narrow on the south side of the river the township is extremely small. The scarp at Rockingham and is cut into by several especially deep and steep sided narrow valleys or coombs. From the base of the scarp the ground falls gently away to the Welland.

A range of permeable and impermeable geologies have been exposed in the valley side. There is a small area of limestone plateau where the boulder clay has been removed. There are narrow bands of Lower Estuarine and Northampton Sand in the steep scarp, but the majority of the township is on Upper Lias Silts and Clays and Upper Lias Clay. Against the river this is overlain by a narrow gravel terrace and a narrow alluvial floodplain on the south side of the river.

The village of Rockingham extended from the limestone of the plateau to the gravel terrace edge, but only the castle occupies the limestone plateau. The rest of the village lay mainly on gently sloping clays and silts.

A PRE MEDIEVAL

1.0 EARLY HISTORY

The present archaeological evidence for pre medieval activity within the township of Rockingham is poor. There are some cropmarks and surface scatters known but this cannot be taken as a representative picture of the distribution of settlement as there has been no intensive fieldwalking survey of the township, nor has there been excavation within the otherwise inaccessible and quite extensive areas of the village and park. According to Pevsner traces of pre-Roman and Roman occupation were found beneath the keep in the late 1960s but the identification must remain in doubt.¹

1.1 Prehistoric and Roman

While pre Iron Age activity can be expected, on the basis of distributions elsewhere in the county, to have concentrated on the mixed geologies and especially the permeable geologies of the river valley, occupation Iron Age and Roman period expanded onto the boulder clay plateau. The most intensive activity is still however likely to have occurred on the permeable geologies and it is here, on the valley floor, mainly on river gravels that some limited cropmark evidence of enclosures and ditches has been recorded, almost certainly representing settlement and field remains of the Iron Age and Roman periods.

1.2 Saxon origins

There has been just one find of early-middle Saxon pottery in the township. This is a single sherd of pottery associated with a Roman pottery scatter to the western edge of the township

¹ Pevsner, 1973, 386. The implication is that the 'new' excavations were at some time between 1961 and 1973.

on silts & clays. A second small scatter has been found immediately north west of the village on river gravel. With the retraction settlement from the extensive boulder clays in the late Roman or Saxon period it is not surprising to find evidence of early-middle Saxon settlement associated with Roman settlement within the valley. The Saxon sites should be part of a dispersed settlement pattern.

1.3 Saxon and medieval village

Rockingham township was exceptionally small. In part this is because the valley at Rockingham is particularly narrow on the south side of the river, but it is also because the township never to have extended far up onto the clay land. This is in contrast to the majority of other townships in the area which generally stretch to the watershed, and in some cases extend beyond to take in subsidiary valleys with separate medieval settlements. Rockingham did have rights in similar areas up to the watershed, in an area known as Rockinghamshire, but this remained a Common until Inclosure and was never exploited to extend the agricultural land of the village, in contrast to what appears to have happened in other townships in Rockingham Forest, remaining an area of common. This may be a result of the royal control of Rockingham, restricting agricultural expansion at the expense of the woods and the deer. This is another factor contributing to the small size of the township and village of Rockingham. With the sale of the manor to the Watsons the township was later disafforested but the king retained Rockinghamshire in the forest, as revealed by the forest perambulation of 1641. Hence most of Rockinghamshire was never incorporated into Rockingham township, finally being incorporated into Corby.

The villages in this section of the Welland valley in Northamptonshire generally lie at the scarp edge, avoiding the boulder clay plateau which was dominated well into the medieval period by extensive woodland. Settlement had presumably nucleated in this areas as in most of the rest of the county before the end of the 9th century and generally there were no subsidiary settlements within the townships in the medieval period. The main exception is Cotton in Gretton, which lay on the valley floor close to the river, apparently within its own small land unit. The north east corner of Rockingham village has been known as Cotton in recent times and it is just possible that another early medieval hamlet lay here. It is in very close proximity to the early-middle Saxon surface scatter which might be the origin of such a hamlet. If so this Cotton may only later have been incorporated into the village with the expansion of settlement during the medieval period. However it is more likely that the street simply gained its name from the adjacent great field which was known as Cotton Field, presumably from its proximity to Cotton in Gretton and that the early-middle Saxon site was deserted at the time of village formation.

Domesday Book records that Rockingham '*was waste when King William ordered a castle to be built there*',² and it is possible that the castle was constructed by William in the area of the original village. However no evidence of late Saxon occupation has yet been identified in Rockingham and so it is impossible to determine where the original village, waste in 1066, was actually located. It has been suggested that the embanked enclosures on the slope to the north of the castle pre date the castle because they are overlain in part by the defences and hence might be late Saxon or even earlier in date. However the date of these particular defensive earthworks could prove to be of the 17th century (see below) and it is therefore possible that these earthworks are medieval in date. Given the small size of the township and

² Domesday Book, 220a.

the fact that there was just 1 hide occupied by 5 villeins and 6 bordars with 3 ploughs in 1086, means that we may be looking for a very small settlement.

It is unclear where the village which accompanied the castle was laid out. It may have been on a new site, rather than on the site of the late Saxon settlement having perhaps been displaced from the limestone plateau edge by the castle. However given that the church was in existence in the 12th century, well before the foundation of the market, it may give a good indication of the location of the tenements of the early medieval village. The hollow way leading west from the church, which appears likely to have been the original road to Cottingham, together with the tenements row that existed in 1615 to the north east of the church, may have represented the remnants of the early medieval village, being essentially two tenement rows fronting either side of the conjectural Cottingham road.

B MEDIEVAL & POST MEDIEVAL

1.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Rockingham was held in the late Saxon period by a minor lord and at the conquest the settlement itself was waste. It became an important settlement when William I created a castle there at some time between 1066 and 1086 and the castle has dominated the settlement ever since. He undoubtedly chose the village because of the very strong defensive location it offered and the control this would provide over the major road running north from London to Oakham. The king made this his main administrative centre in the area, having by 1086 already begun detaching woodland from various adjacent royal manors and attaching them to Rockingham as a royal forest, which was soon to take the name of the village. If these other manors had been significant royal residences before the conquest it seems they were superseded by the new castle, only the more distant manors of Brigstock and its 1086 dependency of Geddington and Kings Cliffe were retained as residences, and these largely as elaborate hunting lodges. Brigstock and Kings Cliffe became the centres of the other two bailiwicks of the forest during the medieval period.

The castle continued to function as a defensive site through the medieval period but by the early 17th century a greater part of the wall was thrown down and the site converted by the Watsons into a country house. The site was heavily re-fortified in the Civil War, when a substantial part of the town around the castle, including the church was demolished to provide a clear field of fire. Thereafter it reverted to a country house with the development of an extensive landscape park.

Rockingham was always a tiny township, between 766 and 890 acres, and never grew into a large village although, being almost solely on permeable geologies it was probably very productive agriculturally and hence to be expected to have a higher than average population and wealth per square kilometre. However the village did grow significantly by the 14th century, well above the size one would have expected for such a small township. This must have been the result not only of the presence of the castle and the passing trade provided by the major road, but also of the founding of a market in Rockingham in 1272 by the Earl of Cornwall.

The late foundation of the market implies a lack of interest by the crown in the promotion of Rockingham as a town, and its failure to gain truly urban status may in part be the result of the lack of effective long term seigneurial interest. It is clear that the market functioned through the late 13th and earlier 14th centuries, but it is uncertain whether the market continued to thrive through the later 14th and 15th centuries. It certainly functioned in the early 17th century and survived through to the end of the 18th century although by then of only minor significance. The success Rockingham's market and the associated growth of the settlement must in part have been due to the presence of the castle and to the position on a major road. However perhaps most significant was the settlements position, with access to the rich agricultural lands of the Welland valley at a point on the periphery of the market hinterlands of the more important towns of Kettering, Rothwell, Uppingham and especially Stamford.

Rockingham is an excellent example of a small market village which had clear if modest long term commercial success. It was one of if not the smallest of Northamptonshire's medieval market villages and, unlike most, it also thrived in the post medieval period. Today it provides a unique combination of well preserved and high potential archaeological remains of major royal castle, probably has good surviving buried evidence for the defences of the Civil War garrison, a wholly deserted market place and extensive areas of tenements which have largely avoided disturbance since the mid 17th century. There is also a good potential throughout the rest of the settlement for other tenement evidence in front of or to the side of existing buildings. Moreover, the broad layout of the settlement is understood and there is a good documentary record to complement the archaeology. The settlement is clearly of national importance with a high research potential.

2.0 TOPOGRAPHICAL DEVELOPMENT

The settlement comprised three major components. The primary axis of the town is along the major north-south road, from London to Oakham. The castle was positioned on the top of the major scarp immediately adjacent to the road, presumably to control this strategic route. The main road represented the major component of the settlement, having occupation on both sides running north from the castle down the slope towards the river. The market place appears to have been inserted between the castle and the main road at the southern end of the town. A second axis, largely deserted by the 17th century, ran east west immediately to the north of the castle. This included the church and may have been a primary component of the settlement while the development along the main road may have been largely secondary.

The plan form of the village appears to have been determined by a major furlong boundary running east-west, parallel to the scarp, and close to the bottom of the main slope of the valley side. It is followed by the road eastward, which is likely originally to have been the main road to Gretton. It also forms the northern boundary of the tenement row which existed in 1615 to the north of the church and which appears from earthworks to have extended yet further to the west along the hollow way which is likely to represent the medieval the road leading towards Cottingham. It is possible that this east-west road and tenement rows, which contains the church, may represent the village which accompanied the castle in the 12th and earlier 13th centuries. Small quantities of pottery of 12th - 17th century date have been recovered from this southern half of the settlement. At their western end these earthworks, in the form of enclosures bounded by low banks and scarps are cut by the hollow way to the

north and overlain by the defensive earthworks outside the castle ditch on the south. Some contain small quarry pits.³ They might represent closes associated with the late Saxon or early medieval village, replaced by the castle or in later medieval desertion. However there is some uncertainty as to the date of the defensive earthworks which overlie these enclosures, which could be from the Civil War re-fortification (see above) and hence this stratigraphic relationship does not demonstrate they pre-date the castle.

The high street running north is a distinctly different component of the settlement as seen in 1615. It comprises tenement rows fronting either side of the road. The alignment of the road reflects the reverse 's' form of the adjacent furlong and appears to represent expansion of the settlement over part of the furlong. This would suggest that this area may be a medieval expansion of the settlement either in the 12th or 13th century or even perhaps as part of a re-planning of the settlement with the foundation of the market and the laying out of the market place. This expansion along the line of the major road would be a logical development for the settlement, particularly in its phase of commercial development. However the re-planning may have been more fundamental. The main road as depicted in 1615 and revealed by earthworks has two awkward doglegs: one where it turns westward to enter the combe that brings it down into the market place and the second where it leaves the north end of the settlement. The presence of a back lane on the eastern edge of the settlement may indicate an earlier line of this major road, explaining the confusing earthworks of road lines which roughly projects the alignment of the western road towards the back lane as it runs down slope to the east of the market place. Is it possible that the market place was created and the northern block of the town laid out to one side of the main road by diverting its course in front of the castle gate and to the north laying out tenements on either side over an area enclosed from the open field. If the small extension of the settlement area at the north east side of this street, with the road on the east side known as Cotton, together with the rectangular enclosure to the north, does represent an isolated early settlement (see above) then it will have been joined to the main village by such a re-planning.

While there appears to have been depopulation of an area to the west of the church before 1615 and presumably in the late medieval period, the market place and adjacent tenements were deserted as a result of enforced clearance during the Civil War, which involved the demolition of 11 houses.⁴ The main road had however already been diverted from the course through the coombe in 1618, presumably as the first stage of a process of imparking which would continue in the later 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

³ RCHME, 1979, 130.

⁴ Winckley, 1899-90, 375.

3.0 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

3.1 MANORIAL

3.1.1 Manors

3.1.1.1 Royal Manor⁵

In 1066 Rockingham had been held by Bovi but by 1086 it was in the hands of the king. It was a small manor comprising just 1 hide. The castle erected by the king at Rockingham became the administrative centre of the forest of Rockingham, an extensive area brought under forest law by William I. Large tracts of woodland, which had been appendant to the royal manors of Corby, Gretton and Duddington in 1066, were detached from those manors and created as a royal forest attached to and administered from the royal castle. Until the 14th century the manor was generally held by the king himself, although in the later 13th century it was held by Edmund Earl of Cornwall, and it remained a parcel of the Duchy of Cornwall thereafter. In the 14th and 15th centuries, for most of the time, it was held by successive queens, but by then it was little more than a hunting lodge rather than a fortress. The royal owners were however rarely in residence during the medieval period, typically the castle and forest was held by a constable, for a yearly payment.

In 1544 the manor was leased to Sir Edward Watson⁶ and in 1601-2 the Watson family purchased the manor outright, including the fairs, markets, tolls and customs. Then slightly later Sir Lewis Watson purchased the park at Rockingham, which had initially been retained by the crown, so completing their control of the whole manor.⁷

3.1.1.2 Other properties

In 1279-80 Humphrey de Bassingbourne, lord of the manor of Benefield, held 1 messuage in Rockingham.⁸ In 1324-5 John de Hastings held a capital messuage and 18 free tenants in Rockingham.⁹ The Pipewell Abbey registers also record that the abbey held one tenement there in the medieval period,¹⁰ while the prior of Fineshade held one cottage there at the dissolution.¹¹

By 1467 the Holt family also had property in Rockingham comprising a capital messuage with land and pasture, a water mill and 6 cottages, all held at will apart from 1 cottage held for life.¹² None of these properties probably represent a separate manor in their own right but were probably held of the royal manor. The history and indeed the location of the tenements remains uncertain.

⁵ The account of the manor and other property is largely taken from Bridges, 1791, vol.2, 334-7, with further information from Colvin, 1963, vol.2, p.815-818.

⁶ Heward and Taylor, 1996, 290-5.

⁷ Bridges, 1791, 2, 335.

⁸ Inquisition Post Mortem Humphrey Bassingbourne, 1279-80.

⁹ Inquisition Post Mortem of John de Hastings, 1324-5.

¹⁰ Pipewell Abbey Register, Transcript from BL Caligula H13 in NRO FH 146, f.47d and 173-4.

¹¹ PRO, SC/6/henry viii/2781, m.24d.

¹² Rental of Thomas Palmer, 1467, BL Add. Roll 41613.

3.1.1.3 Rectory manor

Though the church is believed to have originated as a chapel to the castle, by the 13th century it was being treated as a rectory by the bishop and in 1299 the rector of Rockingham is recorded as holding one free tenement in the settlement. The location of the medieval rectory has not been established but it may have been on the same site as in the 19th century when it occupied a tenement fronting onto the main street to the north east of the church.¹³

3.1.2 Manorial Appurtenances

3.1.2.1 Castle¹⁴

Pevsner's claim that Saxon fortifications have been found in '*recent*' excavation around the castle keep must be treated with scepticism, for there is no reason to believe that any defensive works existed at Rockingham before William built his castle there at some time between 1066 and 1086.¹⁵ The castle is one of the few known to have been constructed by William I that was not in close proximity to a town.¹⁶ Contrary to Colvin's claim, the road through the village was probably of national significance, as it certainly was in the later 17th century (see below) and it seems likely that Rockingham was chosen for a major royal castle because it provided an ideal defensible location controlling the road. It may also have been chosen as suitable as a hunting lodge and to control the whole of the newly created Rockingham Forest, though this is likely to have been a reason for the choice of the site. The site of the castle was determined by the deep, steep sided but narrow coomb which cut back into the limestone plateau creating a narrow steep sided spur with steep scarp falling into the Welland valley on the north, one of the best defensive locations in this part of the county.

The original castle was a motte and bailey, with a bailey flanking the motte on both north and south, taking up almost the whole of the narrow spur. The original timber defences were replaced in stone on the motte and north bailey, but there are no significant documentary records before the later 12th century when repairs are recorded in 1187-8 to walls and buildings. However the castle had been developed at various times to maintain an up to date defensive form. The walls had been constructed in stone, by the early 13th century if not before. There were two major building programmes in the earlier and late 13th century and various repairs and alterations throughout the 13th and 14th centuries. The need for this second major campaign of work was in part made clear by the 1250 survey which reveals that the outer moat was nearly silted up and the walls in such a state that it was probably undefendable.

Works continued until 1440 when a new hunting lodge was constructed, presumably the moated lodge within the deer park, after which the castle saw little attention. The last repairs are recorded in 1483-5. There is no evidence of repairs in the Tudor period and in about 1534 permission was granted for stone to be taken from the castle for construction work elsewhere.

¹³ 1st edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 mapping, 1886.

¹⁴ Heward & Taylor, 1996, 290-5. Hartshorne, 1845, 356-375; Colvin, 1963, 815-818; Klingelhofer, 1983, 11-25. Klingelhofer lists the main previous studies of the castle. Various other sources for the castle are listed by RCHME and Klingelhofer.

¹⁵ Pevsner, 1973. The implication is that the 'new' excavations were at some time between 1961 and 1973. Though significant remains may have been found, the dating and interpretation must remain seriously in question, especially as no published record of such excavations has been identified in the present study. Pevsner's statement is said to be based on a detailed study of the castle specially prepared for the 1973 revised edition by Sir Gyles Isham.

¹⁶ Colvin, 1963, 815.

Leland provides a detailed description of the castle as it stood in ruins in the mid 16th century, before its acquisition by the Watsons:

*'The castelle of Rokingham standith on the topppe of an hille, right stately, and hath a mighty dicke, and bulle warkes agayne withoute the dicke. The utter waulles of it yet stond. The kepe is exceding fair and strong, and in the waulles be certein strong tower. The lodgings that were within the area of the castelle be discoverid and faul to ruine. One thing in the waullis of this castelle is much to be notid, that is that they be embatelid on booth the sides. So that if the area of the castelle were won by cumming in at other of the 2 greate gates of the castelle, yet the keepers of the waulles might defende the castelle. I markid that there is a stronge tower in the area of the castell, and from it over the dungeon dike is a drw bridge to the ungeon toure.'*¹⁷

The south bailey was probably never reconstructed in stone. In contrast the curtain of the north bailey, which was encompassed by a moat on all but the steep west side of the castle, was at some point wholly reconstructed in stone and circular towers added at the corners. The whole of the circuit of the bailey wall with its two corner turrets survived in 1615 but was demolished soon after either as part of the Watsons' improvements to their residence or when the castle was slighted after the Civil War. The ditch of the bailey on the north side was filled in, presumably at the same time as the destruction of the curtain wall, for the ditch in places contains the massive remains of the demolished curtain wall with large chunks of mortared masonry and stone dressings.¹⁸ The strongest feature of the bailey was the great East Gate, which was in origin a late 12th or early 13th century construction but was completely remodelled in the 1248. It is clear therefore that the castle gate, which in the later medieval period led straight out onto the market place, lay here well before the market was established. The position of the other gates has not been established. The defences of the castle were dominated by a large shell keep on top of the earlier motte. The shell keep was of two floors with an 80ft exterior diameter and surrounded by a moat 30 ft wide. It was entered by a drawbridge and barbican. The keep is attributed to the early 13th century. It was finally demolished perhaps as part of the slighting of the castle after the Civil War. The motte itself was later substantially altered and lowered in connection with garden redesign.

There is detailed documentary information on the wide range of buildings within the castle of which the remains of the large 13th century hall and chamber survive. Other buildings included a chapel, royal lodgings, kitchen, and various outbuildings including granary, coal house for charcoal, two stables and a gaol. These buildings are briefly described by RCHME and by Klingelhofer from documentary sources and the standing evidence.

The castle was extensively rebuilt and developed as a country house by the Watson family from the mid 16th century onwards. The main phases of building are from the later 16th and 17th century. However in the 18th century Rockingham was relegated to a secondary residence of the family and hence the next phase of remodelling did not occur until the 19th century,¹⁹ with further reconstruction and alteration in the 1960s.²⁰

¹⁷ Leland, f.13-14.

¹⁸ Observation during machine trenching in 1980s by G Foard, note in SMR.

¹⁹ Heward & Taylor 1996. In the 18th century Rockingham was relegated to a secondary residence of the family.

²⁰ Pevsner 1973.

The north and east prospects of the castle are depicted by Tillemans in c.1720.²¹ At that time there were buildings constructed into east curtain wall of the bailey facing out towards the former market place. There was also what appears to be a farm courtyard with several barns in this area immediately to the east of the castle to the south of the gate. These extensive outbuildings are shown on the maps of 1806 & 1815.²² They may represent reconstruction after the Civil War as they would have represented a major limitation to the defensive capabilities of the castle unless encompassed by extensive outworks. It is therefore unlikely, though not impossible, that they are represented in stylised form by the small buildings in this area on the 1615 map. These buildings had been wholly demolished by 1822,²³ when extensive new planting of trees had been extended into the area, part of a major new landscaping scheme.

The scale of the earthen and stone construction at Rockingham, and the elaborate arrangements for the performance of castle-guard at Rockingham show that it was a major fortress, at least during the later 11th to 13th centuries. The apparent extent and complexity of the internal apartments, as gleaned from documentary sources, also reflects the frequency with which various kings were in residence at Rockingham. Great Council held there in 1095 was one of many times when the kings held court there. In the early 13th century king John was a frequent visitor. Rockingham was clear much more than a fortified hunting lodge, at least until the 14th century. However, Rockingham was not, at least by the 13th century one of the major castles of strategic importance, for like a number of others Rockingham was farmed out to a constables who was personally responsible for its upkeep. The administrative officers included a constable, the bailiff, keeper of the outer bailey, porter and watchmen. The will have comprised about 13, as indicated by the level of 'castle-guard' service and dues paid by various manors in north east Northamptonshire.

There is record of only one siege at Rockingham, in 1251-2 when the king had to recover the castle castellain by force.

3.1.2.2 The Civil War garrison

Rockingham is one of only four substantial Civil War garrisons and only two long term Civil War garrisons established in the county between 1642 and 1646. Sir Lewis Watson is said to have made his castle a garrison for the king,²⁴ but it was as a Parliamentary garrison maintained by the Committee at Northampton, that the castle had a major role in the control of the north east part of the county and adjacent areas of Rutland and Leicestershire between 1643 and 1646. It never saw a major siege but it did undergo a range of re-fortification works.²⁵ In order to provide a clear field of fire from the defences the church and 11 other houses surrounding the market place were apparently demolished during this period.²⁶ There was also substantial destruction of fabric at the castle, but it is unclear to what degree this was involved in the works for the improvement of the defences as opposed to demolition of defences after the war.²⁷ The motte was also altered by the insertion of an outer and an inner

²¹ Bailey, 1996, 178-180.

²² NRO maps 2330 & 3706.

²³ NRO map 2331.

²⁴ Bridges, 1791, 2, 335.

²⁵ Several of the tenants in the township rendered account for day works with their team and cart employed in work on the fortification of the castle. 'A Particular of the Lord Rockingham's Account', PRO SP28/171.

²⁶ Winckley, 1899-1900, 375. Brief comments on the Rockingham garrison will be found in Foard, 1994 and Foard, 1995, 124 et seq.

²⁷ 'The church of Rockingham howses and other buildings there demolished by Sir John Norwich, £2000'. Also demolishing of the castle to a value of £1500. A Particular of the Lord Rockingham's Account, PRO SP28/171.

breastwork with wooden and stone flankers. The castle is said to have been besieged in the Civil War²⁸ but no source is quoted for this and no supporting evidence for a siege has been located.

3.1.2.3 Fishponds

The Top and Bottom Moat lie just beyond the edge of the township, to the south of the castle, within Rockinghamshire, a large area of former common land within the forest.²⁹ Their function is uncertain. Other ponds lie to the north west of the castle, in the bottom of the combe and although in their present form they are part of the later landscape gardening, it is possible that medieval ponds existed in the area, although no records of medieval ponds have been located.

3.1.2.4 Watermill

No mill was recorded at Rockingham in 1086, neither is one recorded in the extent of the late 13th century or the account rolls of the early 14th century, but there is record of a watermill in the manor in 1274-5 and again in 1579-80.³⁰ It is unclear whether this is the same mill as that recorded in 1467 as part of the Holt property, held by John Meadow at will for 26/8d. (See above). There was one watermill on a leat adjacent to the Welland in 1615 and this survived until at least 1887 but had been demolished by 1901. The earthworks of a leat with channel and brick wall revetment and traces of the former buildings remain.³¹

A second watermill is recorded in 16th and 17th centuries and is depicted on a leat adjacent to the Welland at the north east corner of the township in 1615. This mill had gone by 1806. The site is represented by a leat and low terrace with areas of stone and brick.³²

3.1.2.5 Windmill

A windmill was constructed at some time between 1615 and 1650 adjacent to the main watermill. It survived until 1887 but was demolished before 1901.³³ The low earthwork of the windmill mound has since been ploughed.

3.1.2.6 Deer Park

The deer park at Rockingham is first mentioned in 1256.³⁴ It was a small park, probably straddling the parish boundary with Cottingham. It was enlarged in 1485 to 260 acres. The western portion of the park, within Cottingham township, including the lodge, is depicted a map of Cottingham woods in 1580.³⁵ At this time most of the park was relatively open parkland although the western part of the park had some trees, as seen again in 1615. The park is shown in full on the Rockingham map of 1615. Only slight earthwork traces of the pale survive, the main sections of pale at the north end of the monument probably relating to the original medieval park. It was further enlarged in 1638 with further minor 17th and 18th

²⁸ Whellan, 1849, 814.

²⁹ RCHME, 1979, vol.2, p.126; Brown & Taylor, 1974, 71.

³⁰ Brown & Taylor, 1974, 76-7.

³¹ RCHME, 1979, 128.

³² RCHME, 1979, 128. Brown & Taylor, 1974, 77.

³³ RCHME, 1979, 128. Brown & Taylor, 1974, 76-7.

³⁴ Steane, 1974, 177, quoting Cal. Close Rolls, 40 Hen III, p.290.

³⁵ NRO FH272.

century extensions. A moated lodge was constructed within the park at some point before 1580 and was finally demolished in about 1827.³⁶

3.1.2.7 Warren

There was no warren at Rockingham in 1615 but by 1618 there was a shepherds house recorded in Rockingham which had been converted to a warrener's lodge.³⁷ A warren '*in and about*' the park is recorded in 1650 as having been destroyed in the Civil War while another source places it near to the castle.³⁸ It has therefore been suggested, from the presence of mounds to the south of the market place that have the appearance of pillow mounds, that the warren lay in this area.

3.1.2.8 Vineyard

A vineyard is recorded in 1130 and 1440 but is unlocated, though it has been suggested that it lay to the north west of the town, on a north facing slope north of the deer park.³⁹

3.1.2.9 Landscape Park

The landscape park was variously extended and enhanced in the 18th and 19th centuries. In 1815 the entrance to the castle was at the north east corner of the park, with a causeway, surviving today as an earthwork, leading across the former market place towards the castle gate. The landscaping between 1815 and 1822 involved the demolition of the outbuildings to the castle and planting of extensive linear belts of trees shielding the castle and park from the road. These works also included moving the entrance to the park and castle from the north east corner to its present location further to the south. By 1886 the present Bottom Lodge had been constructed at this eastern gate and another, called Top Lodge, at the south gate.

3.1.2.10 Gardens

Early formal gardens are said to have been laid out in the former bailey of the medieval castle in the 16th century. The present terraced lawns reveted by a stone wall on the line of the bailey wall, which was demolished at some time after 1615. The lawn and the yew walk were in existence in the 17th century and altered in the 18th century.⁴⁰ A 19th century circular rose garden on the site of the motte. A grove was added in the valley in the mid 19th century. The gardens have been maintained and further developed in the 20th century.⁴¹ Geophysical survey on the tennis lawn has revealed probable evidence of former garden design in the form of a figure of eight design, probably a walkway or path, and a central feature in each loop.⁴²

3.1.2.11 Ice House

Within the landscape park to the east of the church the small mound recorded on the earthwork survey is the site of an ice house which stood in the 1880s.⁴³

³⁶ RCHME, 1979, 126. Brown & Taylor, 1974, 71.

³⁷ Rental of Rockingham, 1618ad, Rockingham Castle archive b.12.22

³⁸ RCHME, 1979, 126. Brown & Taylor, 1974, 71.

³⁹ Brown & Taylor, 1974, 74.

⁴⁰ English Heritage, Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

⁴¹ English Heritage, Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

⁴² Note in Post Medieval Archaeology, vol.28; Note in Northamptonshire Archaeology, 25, 190.

⁴³ OS 1st Edition 1:10560 mapping..

3.2 CHURCH

3.2.1 Church of St. Leonard⁴⁴

The church at Rockingham was possibly first built as a chapel to the castle and the advowson lay in the hands of the crown. The chapel was certainly in existence by the second half of the 12th century and although still described as a chapel in 1295 by the 13th century it was already being treated by the bishop as an ordinary rectory.

The church itself was demolished in the Civil War as part of the clearance of the southern end of the town to provide a clear field of fire from the garrison defences.⁴⁵ The church was rebuilt soon after the war and again extensively rebuilt and extended in mid 19th century. This post Civil War building appears to have been built largely on the medieval position. When depicted by Tillemans in c.1720 it was a small building with a two bay Nave, a chancel but no tower..⁴⁶

3.2.2 Vicarage

A vicarage does not appear to have been instituted in Rockingham.

3.3 MONASTIC & OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS

3.3.1 Hermitage

The 'Armitage ground' is mentioned in 1638-9.⁴⁷ Armitage Close is identified on the 1806 map and can be identified with the small square close containing a building on the east side of the main road next to the bridge on the 1615 map. The close contained a square moated enclosure which has now been ploughed flat and now remains only as a soilmark. Its location, immediately adjacent to a major road and in close proximity to a bridge is a typical location for hermitages (eg: Northampton, Weldon, Thrapston), and need not have a significant relationship to the town or market village status of Rockingham.

3.3.2 Hospital?

A Hospital Close is recorded on the eastern edge of the village in 1815.⁴⁸ The close existed in 1615 but the whole area is covered by ridge and furrow. The significance of the name has not been determined. The only other reference to a hospital in the area is that at Cotes in Gretton, sometimes described as by Rockingham.⁴⁹ It is possible that the close might be named from its ownership by the hospital at Cotes or being adjacent to a road leading to Cotes.

3.3.3 Schools

The first record of a school in Rockingham is in 1849; the National School erected by the Hon. R. Watson.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ RCHME Churches Survey notes, in SMR.

⁴⁵ A Particular of the Lord Rockingham's Account, PRO SP28/171.

⁴⁶ Bailey, 1996, 180.

⁴⁷ Calendar of State Papers Domestic 1638-9, 388.

⁴⁸ NRO map 2330.

⁴⁹ VCH, 2, 154.

⁵⁰ Whellan, 1849, 815.

3.4 TENEMENTS

3.4.1 Population and Wealth

The medieval and post medieval taxation and related records show that Rockingham was always very small compared to most other settlements in the county, though this is to a large degree the result of it having such a small township area (table 1). In relative terms it saw some but not major expansion in the medieval period and then a significant growth by the early 16th century. When however the size of the township is taken into account Rockingham stands out in the medieval and post medieval period as having an exceptionally large population and wealth. This almost certainly reflects to a large extent the wealth and occupation provided by the market, but will also have been influenced by the presence of a major castle and the passing trade from the major communications route. In relative terms there was a substantial decline in the settlement between the earlier 16th and later 17th centuries. To some degree this may reflect a failure of the settlement to recover from the destruction in the Civil War and the creation by the Watsons' of the landscape park over the site of the former market. However it is more likely that the decline relates more to the decay of the market as the larger market towns came to dominate the county. This decline continued into the early 19th century, leaving the settlement as a small rural village.

Only one detailed medieval record of the number of tenants in Rockingham has been identified, the extent of 1299.⁵¹ It records all free tenants and indicates approximately 31 occupied tenements of some kind in 1299. The assize rent between 1313-1320 was 54/6d per annum for free tenants with no listing of any other bond tenants.⁵² The absence of bond tenants and of virgate holdings is unusual and may indicate that the extent provides only a partial record of the tenements in the settlement in 1299. There were clearly a number of virgate tenements in the township for at least two men employed in the castle in the 13th century held virgate land in respect of their duties.⁵³ By 1467 there were also 6 cottages and a capital messuage held by the Holt manor (see above), but it is unclear whether these tenements would have been included in the 1299 extent. In 1580 there is reference to a total of 49 ancient cottagers and 10 new cottagers in the village.⁵⁴ The next major source is in 1618, a detailed survey of Rockingham which records 6 houses with land, 44 houses without land and a shepherds house converted to a warrener's lodge. However there were also various other tenants' rents listed for which the property was not listed and hence it is possible that additional houses existed.⁵⁵ On the 1615 map the houses shown are heavily stylised, with several buildings set back from the frontage perhaps representing major outbuildings to large properties. The limitations are clear from the way in which the castle keep is depicted. However the map may be expected to give a broadly accurate indication of the number of households at that time. There are in all 57 buildings shown, excluding the castle and church, which accord reasonably with the total of 51 from the 1618 written survey. In 1841 there were 56 houses in the village, a total of 291 people. This would suggest relative stability in the size of the settlement between the early 17th and the mid 19th century. Given the

⁵¹ Inquisition Post Mortem, Edward Earl of Cornwall in 1299, PRO, C133/95.

⁵² Account roll, PRO SC6/949/7.

⁵³ Geoffrey de Rockingham died seized of half a virgate for collecting castle guard rents from the fees or lordships due to pay it, while Simon le Weyte held a virgate by service as the castle-veyte (watchman?).

⁵⁴ Rockingham Castle archive, A.6.6.6: 1580ad.

⁵⁵ Rental of Rockingham, 1618ad, Rockingham Castle archive b.12.22.

abandonment of the southern half of the settlement in the mid 17th century, representing approximately 15 tenements, this indicates a substantial degree of infilling in the northern half of the settlement.

TENEMENTS 1299	IN	without land	with land
messuage		6	4
tenement		8	
cottage		2	
toft		9	
plot? (placea)		2	
croft		2	
virgate			1

3.4.2 Borough / Burgage

Rockingham was taxed as a vill in 1306 but as a borough in 1307. However no references have been identified to burgages or burgage tenure in Rockingham and so this single taxation reference may not be a significant guide to the character and importance of the settlement in the early 14th century.⁵⁶

3.4.3 Decline and Recovery

The documentary evidence so far collected does not give any good indication as to the fortunes of the settlement in the later 14th and 15th centuries and hence no way either to judge the degree to which there was a recovery in the 16th and 17th centuries. The archaeological evidence would however suggest that Rockingham did undergo some depopulation in the late medieval period, particularly the apparent evidence for abandonment of tenements to the west of the church and the presence of some gaps in the frontages particularly in the northern part of the settlement in 1615.

3.5 COMMERCE

The extent of 1299 does not reveal any trades, indeed of the 31 only 3 occupations are clearly identified, a clerk, reeve and rector, although several other difficult names might prove to be trade related.⁵⁷

3.5.1 Market

In 1272 Edward Earl of Cornwall, the king's nephew, obtained the grant of a Friday market in his manor at Rockingham.⁵⁸ There is no evidence to suggest that this was simply the confirmation of an existing situation, although a fair was already in existence at Rockingham

⁵⁶ Willard, 1933, 433; Beresford & Finberg, 1973.

⁵⁷ Inquisition Post Mortem of Edward Earl of Cornwall, 1299ad, PRO, c133/95.

⁵⁸ Bridges, 1791, 334. VCH Notes: Charter 56 Hen III m.2.; Calendar of Charter Rolls, vol.2, p.183.

by this time. The market day was changed in 1315 to a Saturday. The absence of the market from the Quo Warranto Inquisitions of 1330 is no indicator of the success of the market for as a royal manor it would not be expected to be listed.⁵⁹ It is however clear from the account rolls of the manor between 1313 and 1325 that the market was functioning at that time. When the Watson family purchased the manor in 1602-3 the grant included the rights to the fairs and market, implying that the market was still in existence or had been revived by the early 17th century. The absence of Rockingham as a market town in Speed's list is not surprising for it clearly never was of sufficient size to warrant national notice. However by 1712 Morton says of Rockingham and Kings Cliffe that they are '*scarce thought worthy the name of Market -Towns*'.⁶⁰ Morton's comments are supported by the fact that there is not a single reference to Rockingham market in the extensive letters of Daniel Eaton, relating to his work as steward of Deene in the 1720s, even though he makes various reference to attending markets at Uppingham and Oundle and even the fair at Brigstock, he never once mentions Rockingham market or fair.⁶¹ In 1769 the market was being held on a Thursday but it was discontinued some time between 1800 and 1849.⁶²

3.5.1.1 Market Place

The market place is specifically mentioned in 1618 when it was held by a certain Whitwell for 33/4d.⁶³ Though its location is not described it can only be the area to the east of the castle gate, depicted in 1615 as a rectangular open area representing a widening of the main road. It did not extend right to the castle gate, the intervening land perhaps representing a partial enclosure of the market place in the post medieval period, unless it had previously incorporated outworks to the castle gate. It seems unlikely that it will have been an area of former tenements before the castle gate fronting east onto the market place. At this time there were tenements fronting the presumed market place on the west, north and south with the church on the east side.

3.5.1.2 Shops & Stalls

There were stalls erected on the market place in the medieval period, for there is record of income in 1299 of 3/6d from the stallage of market,⁶⁴ while between 1313-25 the stallage was worth 2/- per annum.⁶⁵ However no record has been identified of medieval shops in the town and only one shop is mentioned in the survey of 1618, being held together by a tenant together with one of the houses in the town.⁶⁶ In 1615 there is what appears to be a large island of tenements set within the market place on its north side which could represent the site of shops, but it is possible that these were original tenements fronting north onto the road to the church and never part of the market place.

⁵⁹ Masschaele, 1994.

⁶⁰ Morton, 1712.

⁶¹ Wake & Webster, 1971.

⁶² Whellan, 1849, 814.

⁶³ Rental of Rockingham, 1618ad, Rockingham Castle Archive b.12.22

⁶⁴ Inquisition Post Mortem, Edward Earl of Cornwall, 1299ad, PRO, c133/95.

⁶⁵ Account rolls, 1313-19, PRO sc/6/1124/5; and PRO SC6/949/7.

⁶⁶ Rental of Rockingham, 1618ad, Rockingham Castle archive b.12.22.

3.5.1.3 Market Cross

The market cross is said to have been destroyed during the Civil War. By 1849 just the socket of the cross still survived, used as a water tank.⁶⁷ In 1894 this was built into a new cross positioned half way down the main street.⁶⁸

3.5.1.4 Court House

There is mention in the account rolls, together with the fair and market, of a hall ('aule') held at farm for 18d, between 1313-25, which might be a market hall or court house.⁶⁹

3.5.2 Fair

A fair was already in existence in Rockingham in 1223, held by Eleanor, the king's grandmother.⁷⁰ In 1300 the right to hold a fair at the Exaltation of the Cross, was granted to the Earl of Cornwall.⁷¹ In 1299 the fair was worth 10/- per annum.⁷² Between 1313-25 the perquisites of the fair were worth between 31/- and 33/3d per annum.⁷³ The fair continued through the late medieval period for in 1474 there is record of 3/4d profit from the fair at feast of Exaltation of Holy Cross.⁷⁴ The fair continued to be held in 1849, on the 25th September,⁷⁵ in 1891 it was reported that the celebrated horse fair '*still lingers on*',⁷⁶ and a large fair for horses and cattle was still being held annually in the village on the 25th September in 1901.⁷⁷ A field called Cow Fair in 1806 may represent the site of the fair in the 18th and 19th century, an area which had been open field in 1615, perhaps transferred here as a result of the enclosure of the market place in the 17th century.⁷⁸

3.5.3 Inns & Alehouses

In 1277-8 an inn (hospitium?) Appears to be recorded in Rockingham.⁷⁹ When the detailed records for alehouses begin in 1630 we find that Rockingham, with 6 alehouses, ranks 14th (17th if one takes account of major omissions) in the county. The number had fallen by 1673-4 to just 4, placing the settlement within the top 30 settlements and to just 2 in 1755 and in 1825.⁸⁰ The figure for 1630 is high, and given the small size of the settlement itself it is even more significant. Although it is exceeded by a number of other non market villages, these generally lay on major roads and are thought to have been providing a major service of victuals and accommodation to travellers. In the case of Rockingham it is impossible to distinguish the influence of the major road from that of the market upon the number of alehouses, but the high figure in 1630 would imply a significant commercial component to

⁶⁷ Whellan, 1849, 814. Listed Buildings list suggests 14th century in origin.

⁶⁸ Markham, 1901, 101-3.

⁶⁹ Account rolls, PRO sc/6/1124/5 and SC6/949/7.

⁷⁰ Goodfellow, 1987, 321.

⁷¹ Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem, iii, 460, quoted by Goodfellow, 1987, 322.

⁷² Inquisition Post Mortem Edward Earl of Cornwall, 1299ad, PRO, c133/95.

⁷³ Account rolls, 1313-19, PRO sc/6/1124/5 and SC6/949/7.

⁷⁴ Account Roll, PRO SC6/949/10.

⁷⁵ Whellan, 1849, 814.

⁷⁶ Wise, 1891.

⁷⁷ Markham, 1901, 103.

⁷⁸ NRO maps 3706 and 2330.

⁷⁹ PRO sc/6/1124/11.

⁸⁰ NRO, Quarter Session Records.

the economy of the settlement, with significant numbers of people being drawn into the settlement and requiring accommodation and victuals. The decline in the number of alehouses may be a good indicator of the decline of commercial activity in Rockingham in the later 17th and 18th centuries.

3.5.4 Hinterland

The definition of hinterlands for this study has necessarily been conducted in a relatively simplistic fashion. Firstly using Bracton's theoretical measurement of $6\frac{2}{3}$ miles as the distance within which a new market could be considered to provide direct competition to an existing market.⁸¹ An alternative has been calculated using Thiessen polygons. The latter have just taken into account the markets towns which were clearly successful and which survived into the post medieval period. The Thiessen polygons are likely to give a closer definition of the area in which the town had the dominant impact but the former should provide a guide as to the widest hinterland from which the town will have derived the most of its trade. These theoretical constructs will of course have been substantially influenced by the road pattern. They will also have been affected by physical topography and land use, though in Northamptonshire, unlike upland counties, these are likely to have been relatively limited in their impact.

A major limitation in the analysis of the hinterland, half of which lay in Rutland and Leicestershire, is the lack of data from beyond the county boundary on the documentary, topographical and historic landscape and archaeological data, which as only been collected for Northamptonshire.

The significance of Boston as a port serving the north part of the county in the medieval period might be concluded from the fact that in 1230-1 three casks of wine were brought from the port to the castle at Rockingham, however little can be read into this for there are similar records of transport of wine in 1224-5 from Southampton.⁸²

3.6 INDUSTRY

The small size of Rockingham might be taken, as at Thrapston, as an indication that the settlement never developed either in the medieval or the post medieval period as a significant focus of industrial production, unlike some other larger towns. However it would appear that, at least in the 18th century if not before there was cloth production in the village, for a Tenter Close lies immediately north of the village, named as such on the 1806. Although it is also depicted it is not named 1615 map and so it is unclear how early production began.⁸³ In this light of this evidence it may be significant that there were two watermills in this small township in the 16th and 17th centuries, and the addition during the 17th century of a windmill. This may not simply reflect the need for corn milling. Although no specific record of the function of the mill has been identified, it is possible that the construction of a second water mill was as a fulling mill related to the development of cloth production at Rockingham in the post medieval period. Unfortunately the militia lists for Rockingham in 1777 does not record the trades in the settlement, unlike most other settlements and so it has not been possible to determine if the trade continued in the later part of the 18th century.⁸⁴

⁸¹ The issue is discussed briefly in the Northamptonshire context by Goodfellow, 1987, 305.

⁸² Bridges, 1791, 2, 334.

⁸³ NRO map 3706 and 2330.

⁸⁴ Hatley, 1973.

The only other industrial activity so far identified in the settlement is related to lime production. In 1383-4 tar barrels were used to start the fire in the lime kiln at Rockingham and payments also made to Robert Mason for mending '*le brandild del lymekilne*'.⁸⁵ The *Lyme-kilne quarter* is recorded in 1615 within the north east part of the deer park in an area on limestone geology where quarry pits have been recorded cutting across the presumed medieval park pale.⁸⁶

3.7 COMMUNICATIONS

The road through Rockingham was a major national road in 1675, leading from London through St. Albans, Bedford, Wellingborough and Kettering to Oakham, thence to Nottingham and the north.⁸⁷ The early significance of this route can be suggested by the presence between Kettering and of Barford, first recorded in 1086. The bridge over the Welland at Rockingham is first recorded in 1229,⁸⁸ while Rockingham is depicted on the 14th century Gough map, suggesting it was a place of some significance and perhaps that it was positioned on a major road though not one of the most important in the kingdom.⁸⁹ Rockingham bridge is mentioned by Leland⁹⁰ and its position is shown on the 1615 map but it was rebuilt on a new location when the road was realigned at some time between 1615 and 1806. This bridge was replaced in 1870 and in its turn this bridge was replaced in 1969.⁹¹

The road from the river crossing may be the earthwork on the north side of the river seen on NCC SP8692/001.

In 1615 the main road ran through the market place and south through a narrow combe, immediately east of the castle, and thus up onto the plateau. This road was diverted in 1618 onto its present course. However in 1615 a road already ran on the east side of the settlement and it is possible that represented the original line of the major road, being diverted perhaps in the later 13th century with the laying out of the market place in front of the castle to bring trade directly into the market place.

3.8 LAND USE

3.8.1 Woodland

There appears to have been no significant areas of woodland within the township in the medieval period, even the park having been largely covered by ridge and furrow. However woodland lay in close proximity to Rockingham, on the clay land to the south within the forest. Between the woodland and the township in the 17th century was a large tract of common pasture called Rockinghamshire, though it probably originated as a tract of woodland in the medieval period which was denuded of trees through over exploitation.⁹² The woodland seen with the township in the 19th century and today is in origin post medieval

⁸⁵ PRO E481, 9; quoted by Salzman, 1952, 151.

⁸⁶ Brown & Taylor, 1974, 72-3.

⁸⁷ Ogilby, 1675, pl.47.

⁸⁸ Goodfellow, 1985, 156.

⁸⁹ Brown & Taylor, 1974, 75; see Stenton, 1936.

⁹⁰ Leland, f.15.

⁹¹ Note in *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 4, 33.

⁹² OS 1st edition 1" mapping, 1824. Pettit, 1968.

planting, both on cow pasture to the east of the village and within the landscape park, for in 1615 only the Lime Kiln Quarter in the deer park carried woodland, and this of uncertain density. As all of this area has been quarried or built over it is impossible to determine whether it ever supported a significant charcoal industry similar to that seen in some other parts of the forest, which might have had a contribution to the economy of the village.

3.8.2 Open Fields & Inclosure

According to Leland in the mid 16th century, '*There lyith a greate valley under the castelle od Rockingham, very plentifull of corne and grasse.*'⁹³ In 1544-5 there were four great fields in the township. By 1615 this had reduced to two, with a large proportion of the land being open cow pasture, within extensive closes around the village and castle or imparked. Then before 1638 the Over Field was also enclosed. Final enclosure, without act of parliament, occurred between 1806 and 1815. This decline in the amount of arable land in the 16th and 17th centuries must have had a significant impact on the number of agricultural tenants in the settlement and could account for a degree of depopulation.

⁹³ Leland, f.14.

II ASSESSMENT

A MEDIEVAL & POST MEDIEVAL

1.0 TOWN

1.1 ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE & SURVIVAL

Rockingham is an excellent example of a small market village which had clear if modest long term commercial success in both the medieval and the post medieval periods. Today it provides a unique combination of well preserved and high potential archaeological remains, the most important of which are a major royal medieval castle refortified in the Civil War, a wholly deserted market place and extensive areas of tenements which have largely avoided disturbance since the mid 17th century. There is also a good potential throughout the rest of the settlement for other tenement evidence in front of or to the side of existing buildings. Moreover, the broad layout of the settlement is understood and there is a good documentary record to complement the archaeology. There may also prove to be some potential for the surviving historic buildings to contribute slightly to the study of the post medieval commercial activity in the settlement. In terms of survival and potential Rockingham is clearly of national importance, with a high research potential.

1.2 Documentary

1.2.1 Summary of Previous Investigation

Bridges' history treats Rockingham in a more cursory manor than some other townships, however the detailed study by Wise more than makes up for this shortcoming. Colvin has analysed the main PRO sources for the castle, while more detailed analysis of the mid 13th century source has been conducted by Klingelhofer. Brown & Taylor have also conducted limited analysis of the Rockingham Castle collection in connection with their study of the village but far more extensive potential is to be expected within the collection than they were able to realise.

1.2.2 Research for this Report

The indexes and catalogues to the major relevant collections in the Public Record Office, Northamptonshire Record Office and British Library have been searched as have those in the National Register of Archives. A rapid examination has been conducted of some of the major PRO sources for the town but this was far from exhaustive. No attempt has been made to examine the documentary sources for the castle given Colvin's previous work. The major collection for the 16th century onwards in the Rockingham Castle collection has only been exploited to a limited degree, due mainly to the lack of time but also in part to the difficulty of access and incompleteness of the cataloguing.

1.2.3 Survival

There is extensive documentation in the PRO for the castle, particularly from the 12th to the 15th centuries. This includes some information regarding the town as a whole but such data is far less extensive. There is also very extensive documentation from the mid 16th century onwards in the Rockingham Castle archive, only a small part of which is currently in the

NRO and which is incompletely indexed. There is a detailed survey of the castle from 1250.⁹⁴ There are a small number of court rolls and papers of the 14th and 15th centuries then a good run from the late 15th century onwards; a number of rentals and surveys from the mid 15th to 18th centuries; account rolls from 1271-4, the earlier 14th century, earlier and late 15th century and earlier 16th century. There is an excellent series of maps of the village, township and of the park from 1615, 1806, 1815 and 1822. They provide important information on the development of the village and the evolution of the landscape park in the 19th century. A specific range of sources relate to the Civil War garrison and related impact on the town and surrounding villages. These comprise material in the PRO and in the Rockingham Castle collection.

1.2.4 Potential

There is the need for a comprehensive review of the Rockingham Castle collection to determine the degree to which the documentary sources can provide a detailed topographical and tenurial framework for the analysis of the settlement in the 16th and 17th centuries, particularly with regard to the distribution of virgate, cottage and other tenements. The task may be somewhat easier than in most places because of the small size of the settlement. However the absence of locational information on the 1615 map to enable the surveys to be correlated with the map is a major limitation and hence analysis will need to be based on the early 19th century maps, and it may thus prove impossible to provide a consistent link back to even the early 17th century survey, especially if the latter is not ordered in a topographical sequence. Of particular difficulty is likely to be the area of the market place and its surrounding tenements which was cleared in the 1640s. Any reconstruction will depend heavily on detailed integration of information from rentals, surveys, court rolls and other documents and, if achievable, will be a major undertaking. There is the need for detailed analysis exploring quality of documentation and to reconstruct the tenement pattern. Given the substantial number of court rolls from the post medieval period it may prove possible to cast significant light on the nature and scale of both commercial and industrial activity in Rockingham. The material for the Civil War garrison is nowhere near as comprehensive as the evidence for Northampton, but even so the material offers the potential to construct a detailed understanding of the funding and troop composition of the garrison and the re-fortification of the castle.

1.3 Historic Buildings

1.3.1 Summary of Previous Investigation

Both the church and the castle have been subject to detailed survey by the RCHME. However, apart from the listing survey there has been no comparable study of the vernacular buildings in the village. The detail provided by the list may be accurate in many cases but must be treated with care as it does not represent the results of detailed internal inspection and analysis of most structures.

1.3.2 Research for this Report

A rapid external examination of the buildings has been conducted, in conjunction with an analysis of the historic maps and the Listing records, to determine how many buildings may prove to contain significant fabric of pre 19th century date.

⁹⁴ Calendar of Miscellaneous Inquisitions, 1219-1307, I, no.91, p.29-31; reprinted in translation in Klingelhoffer, 1983, 24-5.

1.3.3 Survival

Based on the evidence in the Listing there are at most 30 buildings in the town which may contain remains of pre 19th century date, 24 of the 18th and 6 of the 17th century.⁹⁵ However this is more than in some other more substantial towns such as Thrapston and Kettering and represents a significant proportion of the total number of historic buildings in the village and indeed of the total number which ever existed, being something of the order of 50 to 60 in the post medieval period. The spatial distribution of these buildings is not relevant in assessing the significance as there is just a single street within the surviving village.

1.3.4 Potential

The potential for the vernacular buildings to contribute to the understanding of the history and development of the settlement is limited by the small number of those likely to be from the main period when the market flourished in the post medieval period and the apparent absence of any medieval structures. However it is possible, especially if it proves possible to link the tenements in the 16th and 17th century surveys and rentals to specific locations in the settlement, that the buildings could contribute significant information. Despite the shortcomings, the buildings are particularly worthy of investigation as part of an integrated study of the settlement given the high potential for documentary and especially for archaeological investigation in the settlement.

1.4 Archaeological

1.4.1 Summary of Previous Investigation

The present archaeological evidence for pre medieval activity within the township of Rockingham is poor. There are some crop-marks and surface scatters known but this cannot be taken as a representative picture of the distribution of settlement as there has been no intensive fieldwalking survey of the township, nor has there been excavation within the otherwise inaccessible and quite extensive areas of the village and park. The earthworks associated with the castle, village remains and adjacent ridge and furrow were surveyed by Brown and Taylor.⁹⁶ There appear to be some omissions of minor detail from this survey which may be of significance in the overall interpretation of the settlement but largely it is a good record of the remains. There is a survey of the parish as a whole in same study.

1.4.2 Research for this Report

No primary archaeological survey work has been conducted as part of this study, although the survival of the earthworks has been checked.

1.4.3 Survival

The ridge and furrow remains of the open field system are now restricted to small areas within the park and in several closes adjacent to the village. In contrast an extensive area of the medieval and early post medieval settlement lies in the landscape park adjacent to the castle with extensive if poorly defined earthwork remains. The latter is typical of villages sites in landscape parks in the county and almost certainly does not reflect poor survival of archaeological evidence. This is the only located market place in the county which survives with almost all of its medieval frontages intact undisturbed by later development and with substantial surviving earthworks clearly related. There is also high potential along significant

⁹⁵ Listed Buildings list.

⁹⁶ RCHME, 1979. Brown & Taylor, 1974, 71.

stretches of the frontage along the surviving main road frontages in gardens of existing tenements.

1.4.4 Potential

Rockingham has an exceptional potential as the only well preserved, located market place in the county. There is potential for large scale excavation of the whole of the market place. This may mean that evidence will survive for the temporary stalls which are likely to be lost elsewhere. Rockingham is also exceptional in that the exact time (June 1645) during which the buildings around the market place were finally demolished is known. Although the settlement is not wholly deserted there is also likely to be sufficient archaeological survival throughout the settlement to enable the full chronology of the development of each part of the settlement to be explored in detail.

There is unlikely to be any potential for waterlogged deposits from the town itself, although the Hermitage site may yield such evidence as may the mills, as they all lie on or on the edge of the alluvial floodplain.

1.5 Historical Topography

Rockingham consists of essentially a single street, the whole of the market place and associated tenements having been lost in the 17th century. This surviving area retains its medieval and early post medieval form relatively intact with the tenement rows remaining with various gaps in the frontage relating to late and post medieval decline. 19th century redevelopment of a few of the tenements has altered the detailed character, with buildings set back from the frontage but overall the pattern is related because of the lack of significant development of the settlement in the 19th and 20th centuries. With the exception of a few houses behind the frontage in 'Cotton' and the insertion of modern agricultural buildings across the back lane, there has been no significant disruption of the tenement pattern. It is important that this situation is maintained with no development of estate type house groupings which could disrupt the plan form, which is an important attribute of the amenity value of the settlement.

1.6 Amenity value

There is already public access to the ground of the castle and to the castle itself. There is a high potential for further development of the interpretative value of the settlement by modest access to and interpretation of the wider history of the settlement.

2.0 SPECIFIC MONUMENTS

2.1 Castle

Of the surviving medieval structures within the castle the earliest fabric is 13th century. This comprises a hall and service bay, and probable chamber to west. Rest of the internal buildings are of the mid 16th century onwards. Of the medieval defences there is a section of curtain wall between gatehouse and motte, the elaborate gatehouse itself. The motte has been largely removed and the ditch infilled by late 17th and 18th century garden construction. The medieval defensive wall survives in only a few places but its circuit is largely followed by the earlier 17th century and Victorian garden wall. The south bailey is much altered and the earthworks much reduced in height. Bounded by steep scarps on east and west. The main

surviving earthwork is the bank c.1m high with an outer ditch c.12m wide and 1m deep. Slight traces of ridge and furrow within the bailey.⁹⁷

There is the need for comprehensive and detailed measured survey of the whole castle site, both the standing remains and the earthworks, combined with detailed analysis of the documentary sources in the PRO and in the Rockingham Castle collection.

2.2 The Civil War garrison

The Civil War re-defence of the castle demands a detailed study in its own right combining the documentary and the earthwork evidence. Buried archaeological evidence should survive in various locations around the circuit but has yet to be distinguished from the remains of the medieval defences. It is likely that the terraces surrounding the castle bailey on the north and north west sides may be associated with the refortification of the 1640s. Other wholly buried archaeological deposits are to be expected. This was one of only four substantial garrisons in the county and is the one with the highest potential for the survival of good archaeological evidence.

The potential exists for a detailed study of the Civil War refortification of the castle combining analysis of the documentary sources, the standing structures of the castle and the archaeological evidence.

2.4 Fair

A metal detecting survey could be conducted on the suggested later 17th to 19th century fair site to the north west of the village to determine if there are artefacts which might confirm its use. A similar survey on the market place might yield some evidence as to the length of time over which the market and fair functioned there.

2.5 Road, bridge and hermitage

A hollow way led to the bridge, now levelled to the west of the road but surviving to the east. Given that this was a nationally important road there is a high potential here, within the surviving earthworks especially, to examine the character of a major medieval road undisturbed by modern development. Also, because after 1615 the road was realigned and the bridge rebuilt a short distance to the east, it is possible that significant archaeological remains of the medieval bridge could survive. However the whole of the hermitage site has been levelled by ploughing, though limited archaeological remains are likely to survive, especially in the moat.

3.0 URBAN HINTERLAND

For the purposes of assessment of the hinterlands of the medieval and post medieval towns in the county a rapid grading of the archaeological potential of the medieval settlements of the county has been conducted on the basis of professional judgement. A documentary assessment has also been completed, based on a systematic but far from complete indexing of the major documentary classes for each township in the county based on a search of various lists and indexes in the Public Record Office, Northamptonshire Record Office, National Register of Archives and British Library. Separate scoring has been made for each document class based on the number of documents identified for each settlement in both the medieval

⁹⁷ RCHME, 1979, 126-7.

and post medieval periods. The severe limitation of such a quantitative assessment and the incompleteness of the initial indexing task mean that this scoring has many shortcomings but countywide it may be expected to give a broad indication of potential. Details of the methodology are defined in the general synthesis report of the Extensive Urban Survey. It should be noted that a large part of the hinterland lies on the north side of the river in Rutland and Leicestershire and has not been assessed.

The archaeology of the vast majority of the hinterland of Rockingham has been destroyed by mineral extraction and urban development. There is also relatively low archaeological potential in most of the medieval settlements within the hinterland, including the adjacent medieval market village of Corby. However there are several deserted or shrunken settlements within the hinterland, notably Kirby, Pipewell and Shotley, which offer a high potential for the recovery of archaeological evidence which might be related to the function of Rockingham as a marketing centre. The hinterland is dominated by Rockingham Forest. The importance of iron production in this hinterland should also be noted as this may have been reflected in some way in the marketing activity in the town as may other woodland related industries.

III RESEARCH AGENDA

Locate the late Saxon settlement. This may have a high research potential if not destroyed by the castle or built over by the medieval village. It may be possible, given that the village was waste in 1066, to examine the way in which the castle impacted on the development of the village. It will be essential to determine the extent and plan form of the medieval village in order to see the way in which the commercial component was added.

How was the market place and its fronting tenements inserted into or grafted onto the pre-existing village plan. The castle may originally have been separate from the village with the market place being inserted between the tow. However the church lies in close proximity to castle and is significantly set back from the line of the main road. This implies either that it was secondary and part of the market planning, or that the plan form of the settlement has turned around from east west to focus on north south along the major road.

Examine in detailed the character of the market place, including its shops, stalls and any public buildings or other structures, this being potentially the best preserved of all the market places in the county.

The varying status and function of the tenements both spatially and chronologically throughout the settlement need to be explored archaeologically and, where possible, through complementary documentary study. The latter will require an detailed examination of all the documentary material for the medieval and post medieval settlement to determine whether any par to the tenement structure can be reconstructed as achieved in Oundle, Brackley and elsewhere.

The origins and development of the medieval castle and subsequently its conversion into a country house is a major research theme. A discrete element of the study will be into the layout and detailed character of the Civil War defences. In both cases there needs to be detailed study of the documentary record to complement and inform the archaeological study of the below ground and above ground archaeology.

The character of the major medieval road through the town and the way in which the village and town developed in relation to the road. This should contribute to the understanding of the impact of the road on the development of the town, but may also provide archaeological evidence for the origins and development of this road as a major national route in the medieval period.

The location, origins and general character of the hermitage.

The woollen industry may have had a limited role in the town. This may be explored through both Tenter Close and through the water mills. Can the any fulling function of the mills be determined from the form of the structures or from environmental analysis of the associated deposits? Investigation of Tenter Close may enable the archaeological character of the remains of the tenting process to be established to determine whether such remains are likely to be identifiable from excavation elsewhere where such place-name or documentary evidence for the woollen industry does not exist.

IV STRATEGY

The assessment of the management and conservation priorities within the Extensive Urban Survey have been based around an assessment of levels of importance previously applied elsewhere in the county for management purposes. The grading falls into six categories:

Scheduled: nationally important remains that have statutory protection.

Unscheduled national importance: in some cases statutory protection is suggested while in others recording action may prove to be the appropriate response to threats.

County importance: Where significant archaeology is known or where it is likely but confirmation is required. Normally recording rather than preservation would be the appropriate mitigation strategy.

Historic buildings: Buildings known or which have the potential to contain significant pre 19th century structural remains.

Local importance: where archaeology may survive but where, on present evidence investigation does not appear appropriate.

Destroyed: where the archaeology has been wholly destroyed.

White Land: Archaeology not assessed for his report.

In addition in some cases recommendations have been made for the designation of new or the extension of existing Conservation Areas and for the listing of specific buildings.

1.0 EXISTING DESIGNATIONS

1.1 Scheduled Ancient Monuments

Almost the whole of the area of the pre Civil War settlement which is no longer built up, including the market place, church and castle, as well as the warren and other related monuments are encompassed by the scheduled ancient monument. Of the earthworks only the significant areas of ridge and furrow have been excluded.

1.2 Listed Buildings

There are 40 vernacular buildings included on the list, in addition to the church, castle and market cross. Of these buildings 6 are said to be of the 17th century, 24 of the 18th (one including the former forge) and 8 of the 19th century, the latter including one shop.

1.3 Conservation Area

The whole of the surviving build up area of the settlement is encompassed by a conservation area, although the castle and the area between it and the village is excluded.

1.4 Local Plan Areas

P5(J) & J27 : employment area - in former quarry adjacent to road junction at SE side of township.

1.5 Guardianship sites

None

1.6 Register of Historic Parks and Gardens

Rockingham Castle garden is included in the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, grade II*.

2.0 MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

2.1 EVALUATION & RECORDING

High priority for action. Watching briefs on small scale works to recover evidence on date range and likely condition. Evaluation on larger threats, of at least of new house and above, but possibly on smaller scale works where clearly on a frontage. Detailed excavation of all medieval and significant post medieval settlement evidence, encompassing the whole of medieval tenements, not just the frontages.

It will be important to ensure that any works, either below ground or above ground, within the castle are adequately assessed to ensure that no archaeological evidence, including standing fabric of 17th century date or earlier, is lost without record.

A review of the earthworks of the settlement is needed. This should be accompanied by geophysical survey to attempt to resolve more clearly the layout of both the medieval and Civil War defences and to disentangle the early village layout if it lay on the north of the castle. There is the need for the accurate mapping of ridge and furrow where it abuts the village area, from the aerial photography and from new ground survey in order to enable this to be taken fully into account in the analysis of the development of the settlement plan.

2.2 CONSERVATION

Maintain the effective conservation of all the earthwork remains of the settlement, including the castle.

Schedule the Tenter Close and the adjacent earthwork hollow way representing the abandoned course of the major road. Consider the mill sites for scheduling. Include all the significant areas of earthwork ridge and furrow adjacent to the settlement within the scheduled monument boundary as this provides an important setting and context for the settlement remains.

The existing conservation area appears to be adequate, given the complementary protection provided by scheduling and by the designation of the registered park.

Given the overall amenity value of the whole village it is important that the small areas of ridge and furrow which still remain within the park and adjacent to the village which are not currently protected by scheduling should be scheduled to ensure that this important component of the medieval landscape and economy of Rockingham is retained for its interpretative value in providing a rounded picture of the medieval and post medieval village.

ABBREVIATIONS

AASR	Association of Architectural Society Reports
BL	British Library
BNFAS	Bulletin of the Northamptonshire Federation of Archaeological Societies
Bridges Notes	John Bridges original notes for his History, from circa 1720, in Bodleian Library.
NN&Q	Northamptonshire Notes & Queries
NP&P	Northamptonshire Past & Present
NRL	Northampton Reference Library, Local Studies Collection.
NRO	Northamptonshire Record Office
NRS	Northamptonshire Record Society
PRO	Public Record Office
RCHME	Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England
SMR	Sites & Monuments Record
VCH	Victoria County History
VCH Notes	Notes compiled by the VCH in the early 20 th century, now in NRO.

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