



University of
Leicester

Archaeological Services

**Archaeological Supervision and Recording
at Oakham Castle, Rutland.**

NGR: SK 86200 08950

Donald Clark



**Archaeological Supervision and Recording at
Oakham Castle, Rutland (NGR SK 86200 08950)**

Scheduled Monument No: SM 17018
English Heritage SMC Ref: S00090335

Donald Clark

For:
Oakham Town Council

Checked by Project Manager

Signed:



Date: 10.04.2015

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Archaeological Supervision and Recording at Oakham Castle, Rutland (NGR SK 86200 08950).

Donald Clark

Summary

Archaeological Supervision and Recording was undertaken during the excavation of two inspection pits, one in Cutts Close, Oakham (NGR: SK 861 090), and the other within the bailey of Oakham Castle (SM 17018, List Entry No. 1010702) in November 2014. The site is part of the scheduled area for Oakham Castle and therefore consent for the work was required from English Heritage (SMC ref: S00090335; Appendix 1). Within the bailey clear stratigraphy showed the build-up of several layers and in Cutts Close a small portion of the original bank was exposed. The archive will be held by Rutland County Council under the Accession Number OAKRM:2014.69.

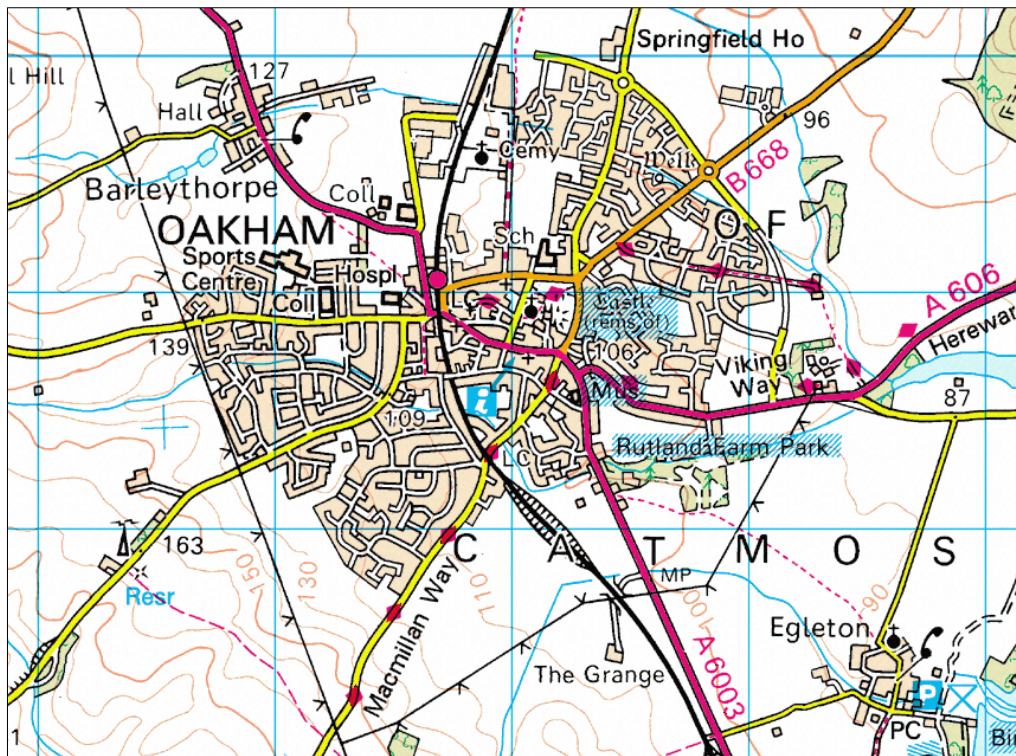


Figure 1: Oakham, Rutland. Oakham Castle is outlined.

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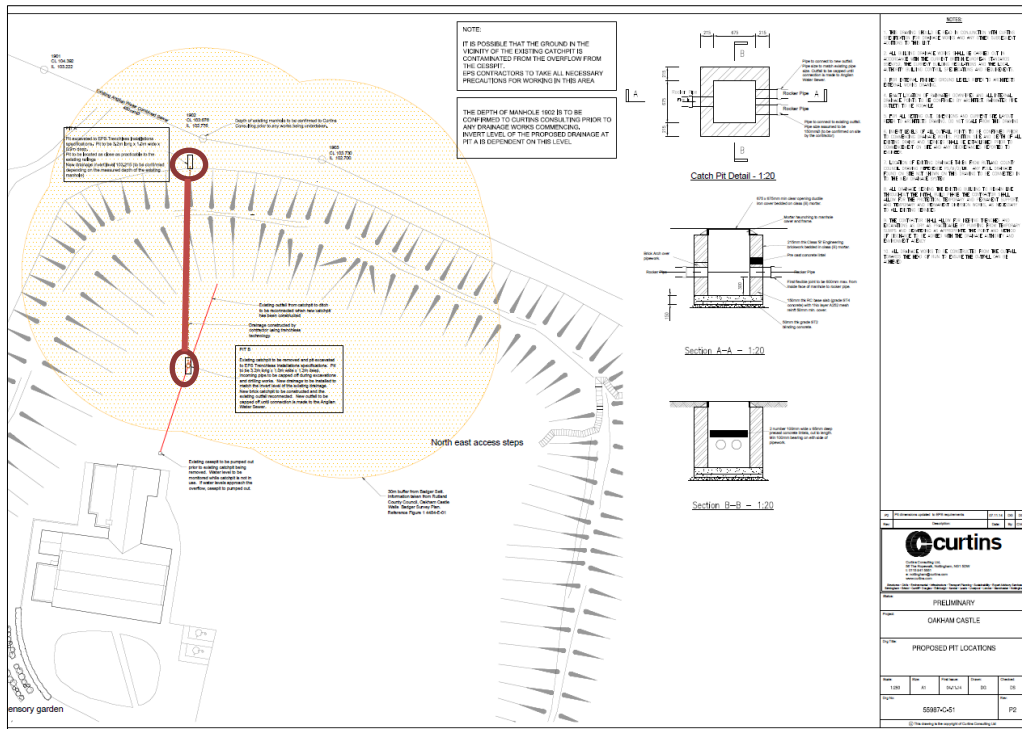


Figure 2: Location of inspection chambers and service line (Provided by client).

Introduction

This report presents the results of archaeological supervision and recording undertaken during the excavation of two inspection pits, one within the northern area of the inner bailey of Oakham Castle, and the other on the outer edge of the bank within Cutts Close, Oakham (Fig. 1) and was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on 20-21st and 29th November 2014.

English Heritage recommended that archaeological monitoring should be undertaken to determine if any buried deposits were likely to be affected by the proposed development. The archaeological work is required by English Heritage, as the proposed works impact upon a Scheduled Monument (SM 17018). A Scheduled Monument Consent application was granted subject to archaeological monitoring of the groundworks (S00090335). A strategy for a programme of archaeological work was set out in the Written Scheme for Investigation (hereinafter WSI), approved by English Heritage.

Aims and Methods

The purpose of the current archaeological work was:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits or earlier building remains.
- To establish the significance of any archaeological deposits/structural evidence to be affected by the proposed works.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits/structural evidence to be affected by the proposed works.

- To record any archaeological deposits/structural evidence to be affected by the works.
- To advance understanding of the heritage assets.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

In addition to these general objectives the following research objectives also apply. The site lies within the Scheduled Monument of Oakham Castle and could identify deposits relating to its origins and development as well as possible earlier activity. Archaeological work could contribute to knowledge on settlement, trade, landscape and society. Artefacts can provide evidence for on-site activities, craft, industry and exchange across broad landscape areas and palaeo-environmental evidence could provide information on land use.

Methodology

The work followed the WSI and adhered to the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (rev. 2014) and their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (rev. 2014).

The programme of work which required archaeological supervision and recording comprised the excavation of two inspection pits using a 360 mini-digger with a 0.45m ditching bucket. The pits were observed during excavation, the sides and base were visually inspected, hand-cleaned where appropriate and recorded following standard ULAS methods. The spoil was checked over and metal-detected in order to locate any potential artefacts.

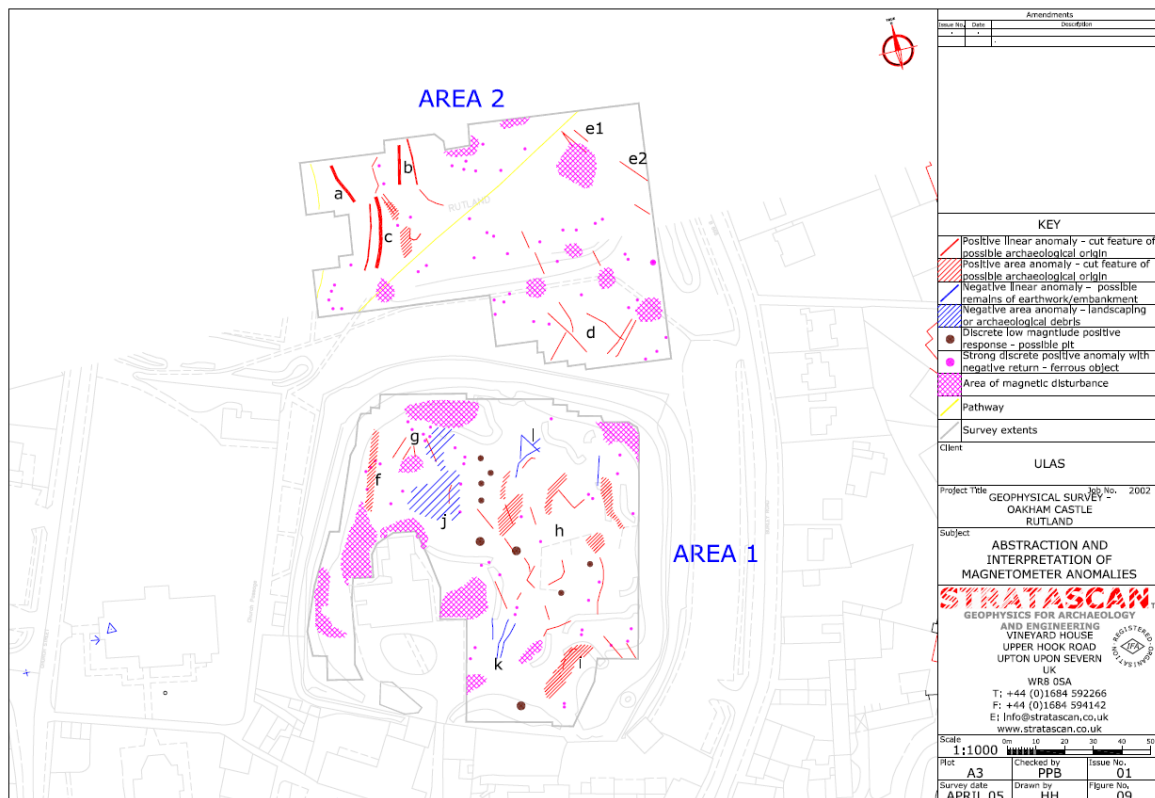


Figure 3: Interpretative results of Geophysical survey of Oakham Castle (from Heard 2005)

Site Location and Geology

Oakham Castle is located in the centre of the town of Oakham, Rutland (SK 86200 08950). The British Geological Survey of Great Britain indicates that the bedrock geology consists of Interbedded Siltstone and Mudstone of the Dyrham Foundation. No superficial geological deposits are recorded (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

Archaeological and Historical Background

The earthworks of the early medieval motte and bailey castle, at Oakham Castle, are listed in the Scheduled Monument records (SM 17018) and have been assigned an early medieval date (HER Ref: MLE5569; DLE5346). This earliest phase of the castle was a motte and bailey and was built around 1075. An earth rampart that formed the early defences of the castle (MLE5574) surrounds the inner bailey and the motte is still visible in the south eastern corner. There is also an early aisled hall house (MLE5570). Oakham Castle Hall has been used as a courthouse since the early 13th century and solely as such from at least the 16th century (MLE9900). A stone curtain wall replaced the earthen rampart sometime in the 13th or 14th century, located to the north-east (MLE9901).

Previous archaeological work

Previous work carried out recently at the castle includes a watching brief on a new exterior lighting trench within the inner bailey (Coward 2010) and a laser scanning and photographic survey of the whole site (Sheppard and Walker 2011). A watching brief was undertaken in December 2013 during tree planting on the north-west side and the south-east corner of the park but revealed no archaeological deposits (Browning 2013), and in June 2014 a watching brief was undertaken when a trench for a lighting cable was excavated within Cutts Close, Oakham, again no clear archaeological deposits were disturbed (Browning 2014).

As it was deemed likely that the proposed development could have a damaging effect on any archaeological deposits, should they exist, archaeological work was required by English Heritage following an approved WSI.

Results

The site was visited on the 20th, 21st and 29th of November 2014 to supervise and record any archaeological deposits during the excavation of two inspection pits, one within the inner bailey of the castle and the other into the bank on the outside of the bailey.

Inner bailey

The pit within the inner bailey measured 3.20m in length, 1.10m in width and was excavated to a depth of 1.20m. The southern section of the pit was taken up by an existing drainage man-hole made of red brick, this man-hole accounted for 50% of the fill of the pit. The remaining 50% of the pit contained a build-up of ground with six distinct layers (Fig. 4). Pottery and miscellaneous finds were present within the layers and these are detailed in Tables 1 and 2 below. Environmental samples were taken from layers 5 and 6 and the results are detailed below (Small, p. 6), as are also the pottery and other miscellaneous finds (Sawday, p. 7) and the animal bone (Browning, p. 8).

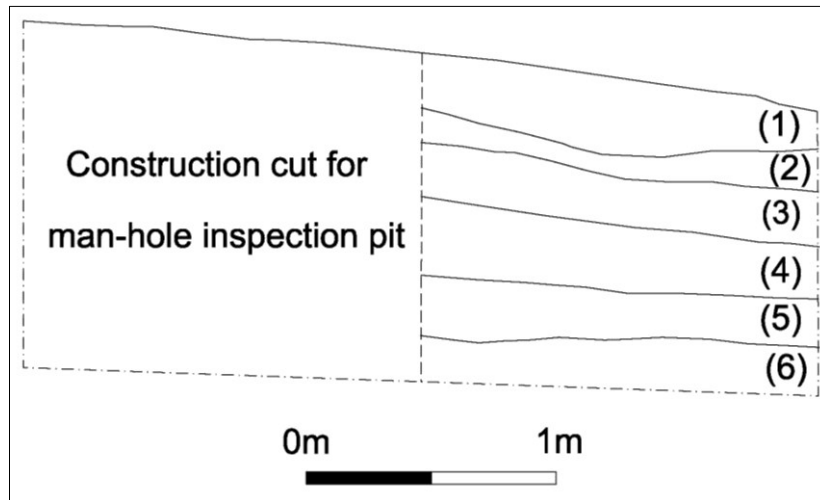


Figure 4: Section drawing of inspection pit

- Layer 1: Dark blackish brown topsoil
- Layer 2: Mid brownish grey silty-clay
- Layer 3: Dark greyish brown silty-sand
- Layer 4: Mid greyish brown silty-sand
- Layer 5: Dark greyish brown silty-sand
- Layer 6: Dark brown silty-sand



Figure 5: Inspection pit within inner bailey facing west

The Outer Bailey

The pit in the outer bailey was excavated into the bank on the side of Cutts Close, Oakham. It was machined into the bank to create access but due to the ground level only a small amount of disturbance took place. No archaeological deposits were observed during the excavation of this pit.



Figure 6: Pit excavated into the bank on the side of Cutts Close, Oakham

The charred plant remains

Rachel Small

Introduction

Two soil samples were taken, one from layer 5 and one from layer 6 of the inspection pit excavated into the inner bailey, both samples dating to the post-medieval-modern periods. They were assessed to see if they contained charred plant remains which are a useful indicator of the environment and activities associated with crop processing.

Method

One part of each sample was wet sieved in a York tank using a 0.5mm mesh with flotation into a 0.3mm mesh sieve. The flotation fractions (flots) were transferred into plastic boxes; they were left to air dry and were then sorted using an x10-40 stereo microscope. The residues were transferred to plastic trays; they were left to air dry and the fractions over 4mm sorted for all finds.

Results

Charcoal was common in both samples. Charred plant remains were only present in layer 5; this included two grain fragments and a small piece of nut shell/fruit stone.

Regarding taphonomy, snail shells were common in layer 5 and present in layer 6; this included burrowing snail shells which may indicate bio-turbulence. A small number of uncharred elder seeds (*Sambucus nigra* L.) were present in each sample; archaeological specimens can survive but they could also be modern intrusions.

Coarse fractions

A range of finds were present in the coarse fraction of layer 5, including; modern building material (wall or ceiling plaster and fragments of Collyweston roofing slates), a ferrous nail, a glass fragment, two small pieces of pottery including a fragment of white earthenware, a clay pipe stem, two oyster shell fragments and charcoal/coke was common. In layer 6 charcoal/coke and animal bone was common. (Identifications of the animal bone are made in a separate report).

Discussion

The grains and nut shell/fruit stone present in layer 5 probably represent burnt food spillage or food waste. It may have accumulated in open features or been deposited.

Recommendations for further work

The low amounts do not justify further work on the present samples. If further fieldwork is undertaken an appropriate sampling strategy should be implemented.

The Finds

Deborah Sawday

The pottery, nine sherds, weighing 190 grams, was catalogued with reference to the ULAS fabric series (Sawday 1989; 2009). Modern finds of brick and glass together with fragments of wall plaster, shell, coal and a clay tobacco pipe stem were also present.

The results are shown below (tables 1 and 2).

Table 1: The modern pottery fabrics

Fabric Code	Fabric/Common Name	Approx. Date Range
EA2	Earthenware 2 – ‘Pancheon ware’	19th C-20th C. +
EA10	Fine White Earthenware/China	19th/20th C
EA11	Earthenware 11 – English Tin Glazed	18th C.

Table 2: The pottery and miscellaneous finds by fabric/material, number and weight (grams) by context

Context	Fabric/Common Name	No.	Gr.	Comments
POTTERY				
1	EA11 – Tin Glazed Earthenware	1	3	Transfer printed blue under glaze
1	EA10 – Fine White Earthenware	2	12	
3	EA10	1	7	
4	EA2 – Coarse Earthenware	2	133	Wide mouthed bowl or pancheon rim & body
5	EA2	1	15	
5	EA10	1	7	Transfer printed blue under glaze
6	EA10	1	13	

MISCELLANEOUS				
1	Coal	1		
1	EA - Earthenware	1	95	Modern brick
2	Glass	1		Modern window glass
3	Glass	1		Modern abraded bottle glass
3	Shell	1		Fragment of oyster shell
5	Glass	3		Modern window & vessel glass
5	Shell	1		Fragment of oyster shell
6	Shell	1		Fragment of oyster shell
5	China clay	1		Post-medieval/modern clay tobacco pipe stem
5	Plaster	1	156	Wall plaster with imprint of lathes on the rear surface.

Site/ Parish: Oakham Castle, Rutland Accession No.: OAKRM 2014.69 Document Ref: oakham castle4.docx Material: pot, clay pipe & misc. finds Site Type: inner bailey - castle	Submitter: D. Clark Identifier: D. Sawday Date of Identification: 22.01.2015 Method of Recovery: wb Job Number: 15-031
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The finds were recovered from layers 1 to 6 in an inspection pit excavated within the inner bailey of the castle. All of the pottery and ceramic building material was modern, save for a tiny abraded fragment of Tin Glazed Earthenware which probably dates to the 18th century. It is interesting to note that previous excavations within the inner bailey have also produced evidence of 18th century activity (Jones and Ovens 2014, 52).

The Animal Bones

Jennifer Browning

Introduction

This report presents the analysis of the animal bones which were recovered during archaeological supervision and recording at Oakham Castle, Rutland. Archaeological monitoring was undertaken during the excavation of two inspection pits, one within the northern area of the inner bailey of Oakham Castle, and the other on the outer edge of the bank within Cutts Close. The bones were recovered by hand and also through sieving of bulk environmental samples from the pit within the inner bailey. The archaeology dated from the modern period.

Methodology

Specimens were identified with reference to comparative modern and ancient skeletal material held at the School of Archaeology and Ancient History, University of Leicester. A *pro forma* spreadsheet was used for recording data on preservation, taxa, bone element, state of epiphyseal fusion and completeness to elicit information on species proportions, skeletal representation, age and taphonomy. Where possible, the anatomical parts present for each skeletal element were recorded using the 'zones' defined by Serjeantson (1996), with additional zones ascribed to mandibles based on Dobney and Reilly (1988). Surface preservation was assessed after Harland et al (2003). The occurrence of burning, gnawing and pathologies was noted and described. Butchery was recorded using simple coding and

description. Joining fragments were re-assembled and the resulting specimen counted as a single fragment, although a record of the original number of fragments was retained.

Bulk environmental samples were processed by wet-sieving with flotation in a sieving tank, the flot being collected over a 0.3 mm mesh and scanned for the recovery of charred and mineralised plant remains, small bones and other animal remains. The residues were air dried and then separated on a 4mm riddle and the coarse fractions (over 4mm), were sorted for all finds.

Provenance and Dating

The pit within the inner bailey contained a build-up of ground with six distinct layers, numbered 1-6 from the top of the section ie 1 =topsoil. Pottery and ceramic building material recovered from the layers was modern, except for one fragment of Tin Glazed Earthenware which probably dates to the 18th century (see Sawday, this report). Environmental samples were taken from layers 5 and 6 and produced small quantities of grains and nut shell/fruit stone, which probably represent burnt food (see Small, this report). Animal bones were hand-recovered from contexts 2, 4 and 6 and from the coarse fraction of 5 and 6 (Table).

Preservation and Taphonomy

The bones exhibited both ancient and modern breakage. Surface condition was assessed for each specimen and was generally excellent and good, following Harland et al (2003).

The good condition of the bones enabled identification of modifications such as butchery, gnawing and pathologies. Gnawing was observed on three specimens; a sheep/goat radius and metacarpal and a pig humerus (1%). One unidentifiable mammal bone fragment from spit 6 was calcined.

Taxa and Carcass Representation

Hand-recovered

Sheep/goat, cattle and pig were represented in the assemblage (Table). Only post-cranial bones were recovered and sheep/goat bones, particularly radii, were most frequent. A femur from a calf was also identified.

Three bones had butchery marks indicating that they represent waste from processing carcasses for meat and skins. They included a cattle scapula and radius, which had been chopped with a heavy blade, such as a cleaver. Two sheep bones, a radius and metacarpal, had fine cut marks, which could have occurred during filleting and skinning respectively.

An abnormality was noted on a sheep/goat radius, consisting of thickening and extension of the medial edge of the proximal shaft.

Sieved

The Coarse Fraction from two sieved samples was examined. The bulk of the material consisted of small undiagnostic fragments of mammal bone, however sheep/goat, domestic fowl, and goose bones were present, as well as a rabbit tooth.

Discussion

An assemblage of animal bones, dating to the modern period was recovered from an inspection pit within the inner bailey of Oakham Castle, Rutland. A range of mammal and avian livestock, including sheep/goat, cattle pig, domestic fowl and goose were identified. A tooth from a rabbit had also become incorporated. Layer 6 produced the greatest quantity of bones. The current assemblage is likely to derive from domestic and carcass processing activities carried out nearby. However, it is of minor archaeological significance since the extent and nature of the parent deposit is unknown and the bones are unlikely to represent a primary dump of waste.

Table 3: Summary of animal bones fragments recovered from the inspection pit. Key mml=mammal; CF=coarse fraction;

Context	NISP	Taxon	Element	Proximal	Distal	No of Frags
2	1	sheep	metatarsal	f	u	1
2	1	sheep/goat	metacarpal	f		1
4	1	sheep/goat	radius	f		1
6	1	cattle	radius	f		1
6	1	sheep/goat	radius			1
6	1	medium mml	shaft fragment			1
6	2	medium mml	shaft fragment			2
6	1	pig	humerus		f	4
6	1	sheep/goat	radius	f	f	1
6	1	cattle	scapula			1
6	1	cattle	femur			2
CF 5	1	Unident.	tooth enamel			1
CF 5	2	Unident.	shaft fragment			2
CF 5	1	rabbit	molar			1
CF 6	1	sheep/goat	astragalus			1
CF 6	1	domestic fowl	furcula			1
CFt 6	1	domestic fowl	pelvis			1
CF 6	1	goose	humerus			1
CF 6	17	Unident.	shaft fragment			17
CF 6	1	Unident.	shaft fragment			1

Table 4: Butchery marks observed within the assemblage

Context	Taxon	Element	Notes
2	sheep/goat	metacarpal	Shallow, fine transverse cut mark on dorsal face of shaft
4	sheep/goat	radius	Shallow, fine transverse cut mark on dorsal face of mid-shaft
6	cattle	radius	roughly hacked through middle of shaft on an oblique angle.
6	cattle	scapula	chopped through with parallel deep cuts just below neck of scapula

Conclusion

The data retrieved from the environmental, pottery and animal bone finds suggests that the area within the inner bailey has been heavily disturbed in modern times and that no archaeological deposits were disturbed by the groundworks and no finds of archaeological importance were recovered.

Archive

The site archive will be held by Rutland County Council under the Accession No. OAKRM:2014.69. The archive contains:

- Watching Brief sheets
- Digital photos
- Site notes

Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in a local archaeological journal in due course. The report has been added to the Archaeology Data Service's (ADS) Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database held by the University of York.

The report is listed on the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York. Available at: <http://oasis.ac.uk/>

ID universi1-209970	OASIS entry summary
Project Name	Oakham Castle, Oakham, Rutland
Summary	<i>Archaeological supervision and recording was undertaken during the excavation of two inspection pits, one in Cutts Close, Oakham (NGR: SK 861 090), and the other within the bailey of Oakham Castle (SM 17018, List Entry No. 1010702). The site is part of the scheduled area for Oakham Castle and therefor consent for the work was required from English Heritage (SMC ref: S00090335; Appendix 1). Within the bailey clear stratigraphy showed the build up of several layers and in Cutts Close a small portion of the original bank was exposed. The archive will be held by Rutland County Council under the Accession Number <u>OAKRM:2014.69</u>.</i>
Project Type	Archaeological supervision and recording
Project Manager	Richard Buckley
Project Supervisor	Donald Clark
Previous/Future work	TBA
Current Land Use	Pasture
Development Type	Groundworks for service trenches
Reason for Investigation	Groundworks within SM
Position in the Planning Process	N/A
Site Co ordinates	SK 86200 08950
Start/end dates of field work	20th and 21st November 2014
Archive Recipient	Rutland County Council
Study Area	c. 5.5 sq. m.
Associated project reference codes	15/031

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Acknowledgements

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