

**An Archaeological Watching Brief carried out within the area of Oakham Motte
and Bailey Castle, Cutts Close, Oakham, Rutland (SK 8619 0894).**

Gerwyn Richards

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Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services were commissioned by Oakham Town Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a trench for additional street lighting at Cutts Close, Oakham. The area is within the site of Oakham Motte and Bailey castle and is a scheduled ancient monument (No 17018). No archaeological deposits were observed during the course of the work.

1. Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services were commissioned by Oakham Town Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief within the area of Oakham motte and bailey castle (SK 8619 0894) during the excavation of a trench to lay cables for additional lighting. An examination of the Leicestershire and Rutland Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) indicated that the area of ground disturbance lies within the scheduled ancient monument 17018 Oakham Motte and Bailey Castle and Medieval Gardens.

In view of the potential of the site for containing buried archaeological remains relating to the monument archaeological attendance and recording was required during groundworks to ensure that affected deposits were adequately recorded.

The works were located within the southeast corner of the recreation ground at Cutts Close and crossed a standing earthen bank, which runs parallel to Burley Road. The large mature oak trees within the bank would indicate that it is of some antiquity.

All work followed the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS 1997), the Institute of Field Archaeologists' (IFA) *Code of Conduct* and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological watching briefs*. The watching brief followed the design specification for archaeological work 18.7.2003 Appendix).

2. Methodology

Contractors hired by Oakham Town Council machine excavated a trench 300mm wide and 450mm deep and approximately 40 metres long. A mini digger equipped with a single toothed bucket carried out the trenching under continuous archaeological supervision. The final nine metres, crossing the bank was directionally drilled, causing minimal ground disturbance.

An initial attempt at trenching on March 22nd 2004 was abandoned after approximately 8 metres because of tree roots and a second route further to the west

chosen in an attempt to avoid these same roots and the work was completed on May 8th 2004.

3. Results

An examination of the exposed section within the trench showed approximately 400mm of greyish brown silty clay topsoil overlaid orangey brown silty clay subsoil. Occasional large angular pieces of probable bedrock were also uncovered. Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered.

Towards the southwestern end of the trench the orangey brown subsoil was replaced by what appeared to be Victorian demolition material, which included brick, tile and nineteenth, twentieth century ceramics. This probably related to some phase of landscaping within the park.

4. Conclusion

Although the groundworks were carried out within a scheduled ancient monument, nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered within the trench. The southwestern end of the trench appeared to cut into Victorian demolition material adjacent to a metalled footpath and probably related to it.

The earthen bank was potentially the most interesting, however the use of directional drill meant ground disturbance was kept to a minimum and no extensive damage was caused to the buried archaeology and no sections were exposed.

5. Archive

The archive consists of two watching brief report sheets including a sketch plan and colour prints. The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services.

6. References

Jones. S., 2003 *An Archaeological Watching Brief within the area of Oakham Motte and Bailey castle and medieval gardens, Cutts Close, Oakham* (NGR 8619 0894). ULAS Report No 2003-134

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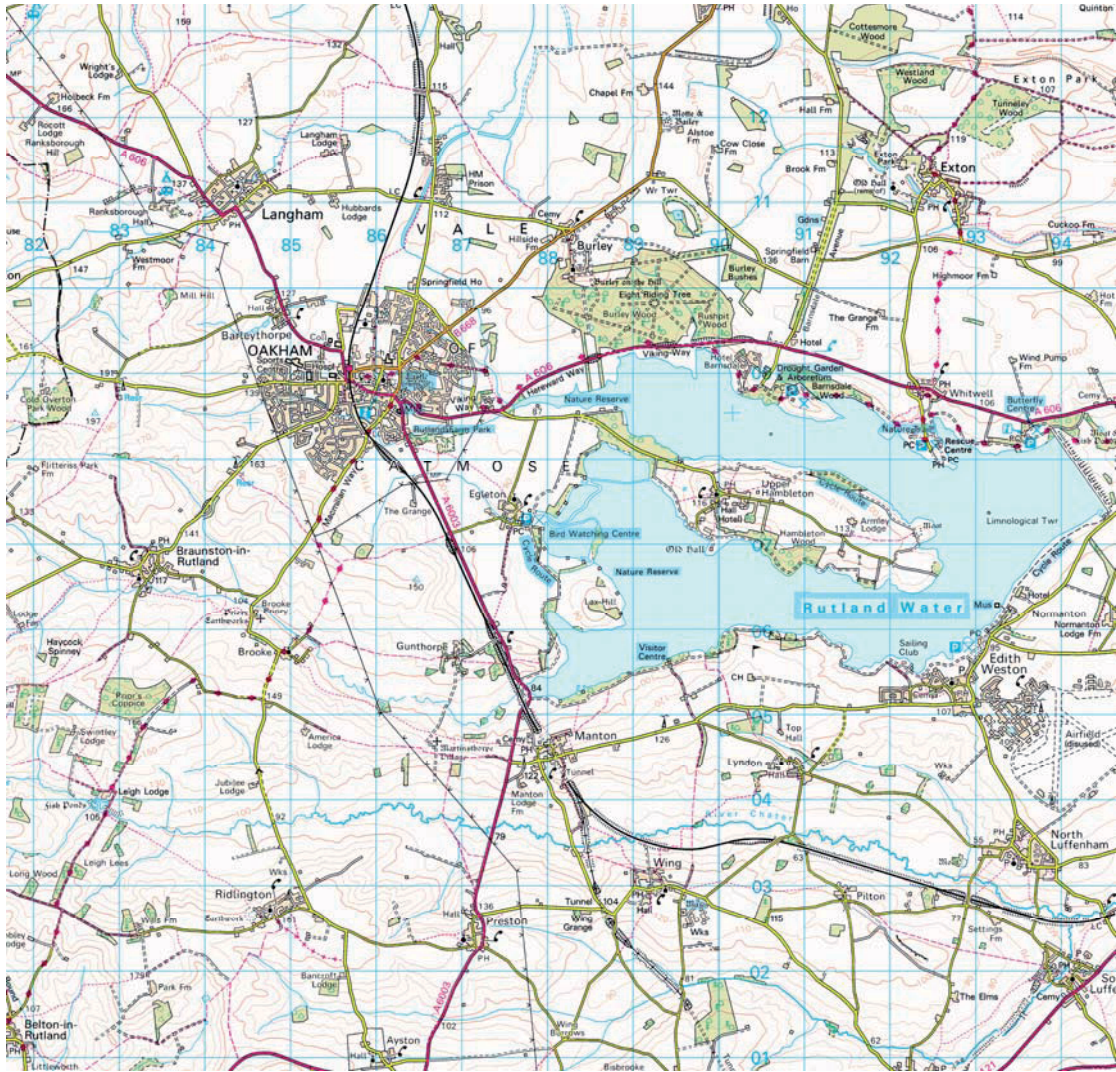


Figure 1: Site Location

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Taken from 1:50 000 Ordnance Survey Map.

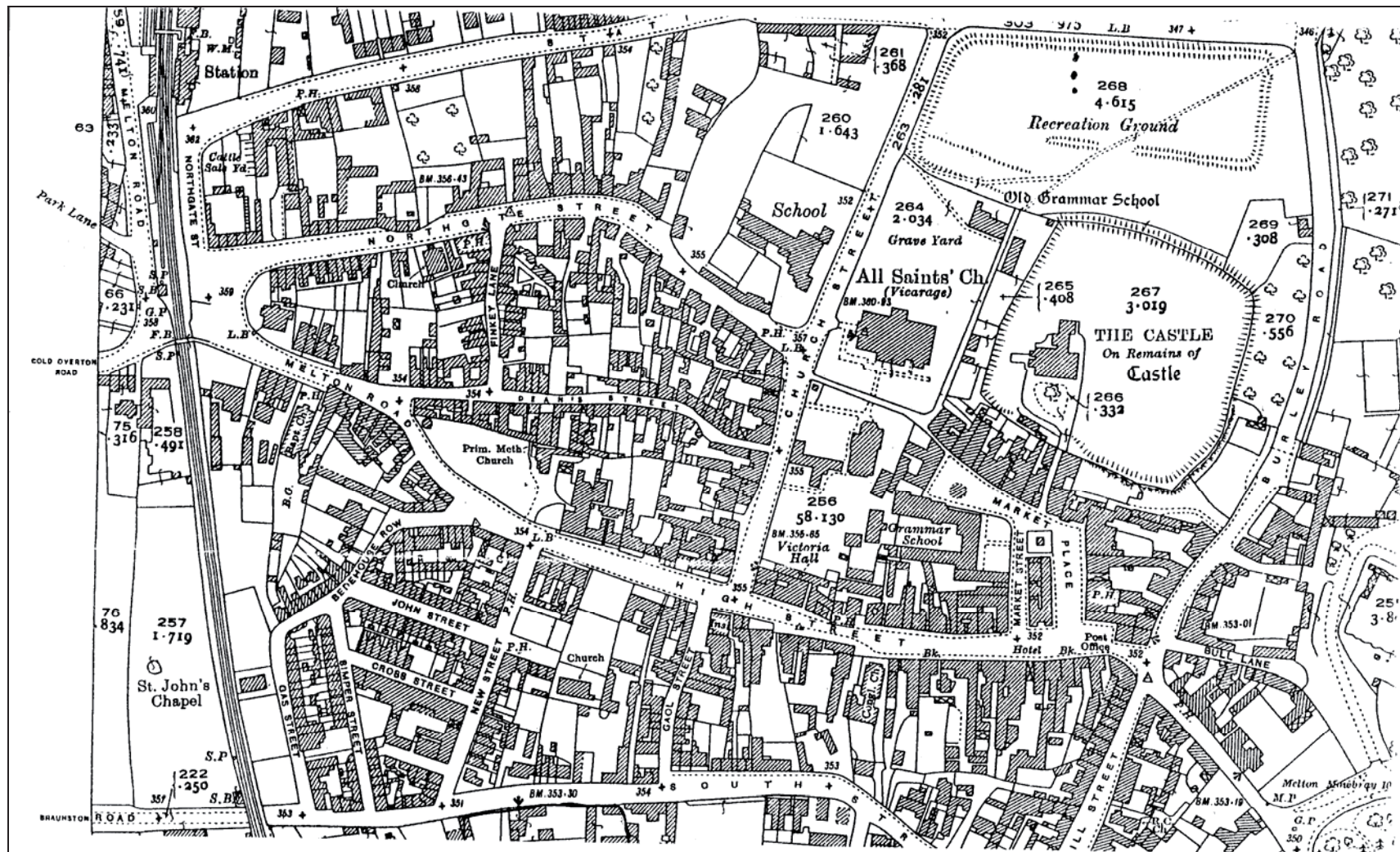


Figure 3 Location of Ground disturbance within Cutts Close Recreation Ground. (Not to Scale).

Appendix

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for archaeological work

Cutts Close, Oakham, Rutland. (SK 8619 0894)

Planning Application: N/A

For: Oakham Town Council and the Dept for Culture, Media and Sport

1 Definition and scope of the specification

1.1 In accordance with the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) section 2, this specification provides a written scheme of investigation for archaeological attendance, as required by the Dept for Culture, Media and Sport, of any ground works on the site which may disturb areas of archaeological potential in connection with proposed works to supply an electrical installation to the bandstand within the area of scheduled ancient monument 17018, Oakham Mott and Bailey castle and medieval gardens, Oakham, Rutland (SK 8619 0894) for Oakham Town Council. It addresses the requirements detailed in the scheduled monument consent dated 25.6.2001 HSD9/2/1988 (pt 12) para 3.iii which states: '*No groundworks shall take place until implementation of a programme of archaeological works has been secured in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (incorporating a specification for the precise location, width and depth of the trench with a method statement for excavation and backfilling) which has been submitted to and approved by the secretary of state as advised by English Heritage*'.

1.2 All archaeological work will adhere to the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* and the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS 1997).

2 Background

2.1 Requirement for archaeological work

2.1.1 The archaeological watching brief involves supervision to cover ground disturbance to identify any deposits of archaeological importance ('Brief' 9). It forms part of a scheme of work to fulfil the planning conditions required by Rutland County Council.

2.2 Archaeological potential

2.2.1 The Leicestershire and Rutland SMR shows that the works lie within the area of a scheduled ancient monument of Oakham Mott and Bailey castle and medieval gardens, Oakham, Rutland.

3 Aims

3.1 Through archaeological control and supervision of trench excavation by the client's contractors:

1. To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
2. To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.

3. To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
4. To produce an archive and report of any results.

4 Methods

4.1 The project will involve the supervision of groundworks by an experienced professional archaeologist during the works specified above. The works comprise the excavation of three access trenches 300mm wide to a depth of 450mm. During these ground works, if any archaeological deposits are seen to be present, the archaeologist will record areas of archaeological interest.

4.2 The archaeologist will co-operate at all times with the contractors on site to ensure the minimum interruption to the work.

4.3 Any archaeological deposits located will be hand cleaned and planned as appropriate. Samples of any archaeological deposits located will be hand excavated. Measured drawings of all archaeological features will be prepared at a scale of 1:20 and tied into an overall site plan of 1:100. All plans will be tied into the National Grid using an Electronic Distance Measurer (EDM) where appropriate.

4.4 Archaeological deposits will be excavated and recorded as appropriate to establishing the stratigraphic and chronological sequence of deposits, recognising and excavating structural evidence and recovering economic, artefactual and environmental evidence. Particular attention will be paid to the potential for buried palaeosols and waterlogged deposits in consultation with ULAS's environmental officer ('brief' 12).

4.5 All excavated sections will be recorded and drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 scale, levelled and tied into the Ordnance Survey datum. Spot heights will be taken as appropriate.

4.5 Any human remains encountered will be initially left *in situ* and only be removed under a Home Office Licence and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations. English Heritage, the Town Council and the coroner will be informed immediately on their discovery.

4.6 Internal monitoring procedures will be undertaken including visits to the site from the project manager. These will ensure that professional standards are being maintained. Provision will be made for monitoring visits with representatives of English Heritage and the Town Council.

4.7 In the event of significant archaeological remains being located during the watching brief there may be the need for contingency time and finance to be provided to ensure adequate recording is undertaken. On the discovery of potentially significant remains the archaeologist will inform the English Heritage and the Town Council. If the archaeological remains are identified to be of significance additional contingent archaeological works may be required.

5 Recording Systems

5.1 Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated or exposed will be entered onto prepared pro-forma recording sheets.

5.2 A site location plan based on the current Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map, (reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO) will be prepared. This will be supplemented by a plan at 1:200 (or 1:100), which will show the location of the areas investigated.

5.3 A record of the full extent in plan of all archaeological deposits encountered will be made on drawing film, related to the OS grid and at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20. Elevations and sections of individual layers of features should be drawn where possible. The OD height of all principal strata and features will be calculated and indicated on the appropriate plans.

5.4 An adequate photographic record of the investigations will be prepared. This will include black and white prints and colour transparencies illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. The photographic record will also include 'working shots' to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

5.5 This record will be compiled and fully checked during the course of the watching brief.

5.6 All site records and finds will be kept securely.

6 Report and Archive

6.1 A report on the watching brief will be provided following the groundworks.

6.2 Copies will be provided for the client, Sites and Monuments Record and planning Authority. The copyright of all original finished documents shall remain vested in ULAS and ULAS will be entitled as of right to publish any material in any form produced as a result of its investigations.

6.3 A full copy of the archive as defined in the 'Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage' (UKIC 1990), and Standards in the Museum care of archaeological collections (MGC 1992) and 'Guidelines for the preparation of site archives and assessments for all finds (other than fired clay objects) (Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700 1993) will be presented to Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services or Rutland County Museums (if finds are present) normally within six months of the completion of analysis. This archive will include all written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken.

7 Publication

7.1 A summary report will be submitted to a suitable regional or national archaeological journal within one year of completion of fieldwork. A full report will be submitted if the results are of significance.

8 Timetable and Staffing

8.1 The watching brief is scheduled to commence at the inception of the contractors groundworks. An experienced archaeologist will be present during this work. It is proposed to watch all works, as specified above, with appropriately timed visits during the work in consultation with the contractors.

9 Health and Safety

9.1 ULAS is covered by and adheres to the University of Leicester Statement of Safety Policy and uses the ULAS Health and Safety Manual (2001) with appropriate risks assessments for all archaeological work. A draft Health and Safety statement for this project is in the Appendix. The relevant Health and Safety Executive guidelines will be adhered to as appropriate.

10 Insurance

10.1 All ULAS work is covered by the University of Leicester's Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance. The Public Liability Insurance is with Gerling Insurance Services Policy No. 62/99094/D, Risk Reference LT 35101 while the Professional Indemnity Insurance is with Sun Alliance Insurance Policy No. 03A/5A 001 05978, Risk Reference LT 27229.

11. Bibliography

MAP 2, *The management of archaeological projects* 2nd edition English Heritage 1991

MGC 1992, *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museums and Galleries Commission)

RFG/FRG 1993, *Guidelines for the preparation of site archives* (Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700)

SMA 1993, *Selection, retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections. Guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (Society of Museum Archaeologists)

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Appendix

Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement

Cutts Close, Oakham, Rutland. (SK 8619 0894)

Planning Application: N/A

For: Oakham Town Council and the Dept for Culture, Media and Sport

1 Nature of the work

1.1 This statement is for an archaeological watching brief.

1.2 The work will involve observation of groundworks during daylight hours and recording of any underlying archaeological deposits revealed. Overall depth is likely to be c. 0.2-0.5m. This will involve the examination of the exposed surface with hand tools (shovels, trowels etc) and excavation of archaeological features. All work will adhere to the University of Leicester Health and Safety Policy and follow the guidance in the ULAS Health and Safety Manual (2001) together with the following relevant Health and Safety guidelines.

1.3 HSE Construction Information Sheet CS8 Safety in excavations.
HSE Industry Advisory leaflet IND (G)143 (L): Getting to grips with manual handling.
HSE Industry Advisory leaflet IND (G)145 (L): Watch Your back.
CIRIA R97 Trenching practice.
CIRIA TN95 Proprietary Trench Support Systems.
HSE Guidance Note HS(G) 47 Avoiding danger to underground services. HSE Guidance Note GS7 Accidents to children on construction sites

1.4 The Health and Safety policy on site will be reassessed during the evaluation .

1.5 All work will adhere to the contractors' health and safety policy.

2 Risks Assessment

2.1 Working within a building site

Precautions. No work will be undertaken beneath section faces. Loose spoil heaps will not be walked on. Protective footwear will be worn at all times. Hard hats will be worn at all times. A member of staff qualified in First Aid will be present at all times. First aid kit, vehicle and mobile phone to be kept on site in case of emergency.

2.2 Working with plant.

Precautions. Hard hats, protective footwear and hazard jackets will be worn at all times. No examination of the area of stripping will take place until machines have vacated area. Observation of machines will be maintained during hand excavation. Liaison will be maintained with the contractors to ensure programme of machine movement is understood.

2.3 Working within areas prone to waterlogging.

Protective clothing will be worn at all times and precautions taken to prevent contact with stagnant water which may carry Vialls disease or similar.

2.4 Working with chemicals.

If chemicals are used to conserve or help lift archaeological material these will only be used by qualified personnel with protective clothing (i.e a trained conservator) and will be removed from site immediately after use.

2.5 Other risks

Precautions. If there is any suspicion of unforeseen hazards being encountered e.g chemical contaminants, unexploded bombs, hazardous gases work will cease immediately. The client and relevant public authorities will be informed immediately.

2.9 No other constraints are recognised over the nature of the soil, water, type of excavation, proximity of structures, sources of vibration and contamination.

Patrick Clay
14.7.2003