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Archaeological Services

Archaeological Attendance and Recording  
during groundworks at  
Flores House, 34D High Street, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6AL

NGR: SK 86073 08727

Claire LaCombe



ULAS Report No 2018-143

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**For: Professor John Feehally**

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## **Archaeological Attendance and Recording during Groundworks at Flores House, 34D High Street, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6AL NGR: SK 86073 08727**

### **Summary**

*Archaeological attendance during groundworks was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at Flores House, 34D High Street, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6AL. The work was commissioned by Professor John Feehally, in advance of construction of a garden building in the south west corner of the garden.*

*The site is located within the historic settlement core and conservation area of Oakham to the rear of the Grade II\* listed building 'Flores House'.*

*One foundation trench was excavated during the course of the archaeological investigation to a depth of approximately 2500mm. No archaeological features were identified, and no datable evidence was recovered from the trench.*

*The fieldwork was carried out by Claire LaCombe. The archive will be deposited with Rutland County Museum under Accession Number OAKRM:2018.24.*

### **Introduction**

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) was commissioned by Professor John Feehally to carry out a programme of archaeological investigation comprising archaeological attendance for inspection and recording during groundworks at Flores House, 34D High Street, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6AL. The work was required as a condition of the planning application for the construction of a garden building in the south west corner of the garden (Planning Application 2018/0644/FUL). This archaeological work is in accordance with NPPF Section 16: Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment.

### **Site Location, Geology and Topography**

The site lies in the historic core of Oakham on the High Street, B640 (Figs 1-2). The proposed site is in the westernmost corner of the garden attached to Flores House, bounded by a wall as well as businesses and car parks (Figs 3-5). The site is accessed from a drive off of Oakham High Street. The relevant area of garden had been stripped of and old shed, foliage, trees and rubbish. The site lies at a height of 105m aOD.

The British Geological Survey identifies the bedrock geology of the area as Marlstone Rock Formation.

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Figure 2: Location of site within Oakham. Flores House and grounds shown in red. © Crown copyright 2018 Ordnance Survey. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495

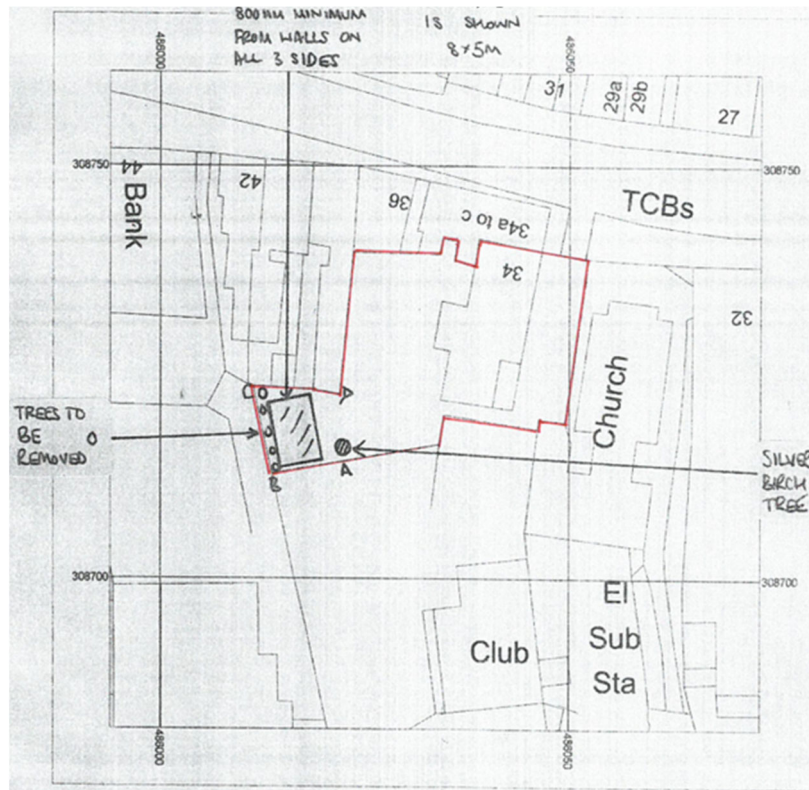


Figure 3: Location of proposed building shown within the house grounds (provided by client).



Figure 4: Area prior to excavation looking north. Visible in the photograph is the existing concrete shed base to be removed.



Figure 5: Area prior to excavation looking south

### Archaeological Background

The proposed area for development lies in an area of archaeological potential, within the historical core of Oakham.

Flores House is a Grade II\* Listed Building (**DLE5382**). The house was constructed in the 13th or early 14th century, the oldest part still standing is the 27ft long stone hall, which was shortened when the cross-wing was built. Also still surviving is the head and mullions of an original oak window on the garden-facing side of the house. Three trusses on the roof remain unaltered, and whilst an original hearth cannot be located the roof is somewhat smoke-blackened. In the 15th century the house was enlarged, consisting of a timber-framed cross-wing at the north end containing a parlour and chamber. The roof of this wing survives intact, as does the east window of the parlour which is stone and flanked by buttresses. Also around this time a southern cross-wing was added, previous thought to be of later date along with a west doorway and fireplace. A terminus ante quem is provided for these additions by a design in the plaster floor: the outline of a child's pair of shoes within a double-framed square and the incised date '1703'. Additions and edits were made to the house at various other points in history and most recently was extensively refurbished in 2015/16, under the advice of a conservation officer.

Adjacent to the house is the Congregational Chapel (**MLE16315**) built in 1861 for the former Presbyterian congregation. To the south-west is a medieval pit (**MLE19757**) discovered during a watching brief in 1996, containing a sherd of 11th/12th century pottery.

In accordance with the NPPF, the Local Planning Authority requires a developer to record and advance the understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance.

### **Archaeological Objectives**

The main objective of the archaeological monitoring was to investigate and record any significant archaeological deposits on the site which would be affected by the development proposals.

- The aims of the archaeological attendance were as follows:
- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscape and to advance understanding of the heritage assets.
- To recover artefacts and ecofacts to compare with other assemblages and results
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

Within the stated project aims, the principal objective of the recording is to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, and significance of the heritage assets within their local and regional context

### **Methodology**

All work followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (2014a) and adhered to their *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2014b).

A Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Work was produced by ULAS prior to the archaeological work being undertaken (ULAS 2018). The developer proposed to undertake groundworks in the form of the excavation of foundation trenches.

On 20<sup>th</sup> August 2018, an archaeologist was in attendance to monitor groundworks. The excavation of foundation trenches to a depth of approximately 2500mm – 3000mm were monitored in preparation for the construction of a garden building.

On arrival it was noted that the area for development had been cleared in preparation for the works to commence. Trees and foliage had been removed, and an old shed had been dismantled. General photographs were taken of the site and its surroundings. The area for development was quite small, being approximately 37.5m<sup>2</sup>, leaving little room for manoeuvre as the area was surrounded on three sides by brick walls and restricted on the fourth side by a silver birch tree.

The ground was stripped to a depth of 2500 - 3000mm by a rubber tracked JCB 8008CTS with a 500mm flat bladed bucket. Excavation started at the south western corner of the site moving northwards. It was discussed with the contractor and agreed that the western half would be

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excavated first, boards positioned on top of the excavated layer, and then the spoil from the eastern half could be placed on top of the boards.

Photographs were taken of each quarter of the site after the ground had been stripped allowing the digger to then track over the freshly dug area in order to continue with the work.

In the north-east corner of the area to be excavated was an old concrete shed base and hard-core footing (Figs 8 and 9). It was planned that this would be broken and removed at a later date without excavating beyond the depth of the made ground.

## Results

The subsoil was not reached in any part of the site during the excavations. The stratigraphy comprised of a rich dark brown sandy loam topsoil with <10% small pebble inclusions. The heavily disturbed topsoil contained a lot of modern debris including a small amount of buried asbestos sheeting, bricks, and assorted plastic containers. There was also disturbance from the removal of at least two trees and the buried stump of another. The topsoil consisted of a rich dark brown sandy loam with <10% small stone inclusions.

There was a range of modern debris mixed with the heavily disturbed topsoil including bricks and plastic objects. The subsoil was not reached or disturbed during the excavation.



Figure 6: South western corner post excavation. Photograph shows the location of a buried tree stump. Scale 1.0m.

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Figure 7: North western corner post excavation. Scale 1.0m



Figure 8: Part of the north eastern corner post excavation looking east. Photograph shows the existing concrete shed base and its hard-core footing which will be removed to the same depth as the rest of the area. Scale 1.0m.

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Figure 9: Remaining part of the north eastern corner post excavation looking north. Photograph shows the existing concrete shed base and its hard-core footing which will be removed to the same depth as the rest of the area. Scale 1.0m



Figure 10: South eastern corner post excavation looking east. Scale 1.0m

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## **Discussion**

The area earmarked for the construction of the garden building had been heavily truncated by the removal of at least two trees and the buried stump of another. The ground had also been disturbed in the past to bury a small quantity of asbestos sheeting which was discovered during excavation. There was a range of modern debris mixed with the heavily disturbed topsoil including bricks and plastic objects. The subsoil was not reached or disturbed during the excavation.

No archaeological finds or features were discovered during the excavation.

## **Archive**

The archive consists of the following:

- 1 x A4 unbound copy of this report
- 1 x watching brief recording sheet
- 1 x A4 print of digital photographs
- 1 x index of photographs

The archive will be deposited with Rutland County Museum under Accession Number OAKRM:2018.24

## **Acknowledgements**

The fieldwork was undertaken on behalf of Professor John Feehally and was carried out by Claire LaCombe. Vicki Score managed the project. We would like to thank Craig Compton and his assistant Matt for their co-operation during the work.

## **Publication**

Since 2004 ULAS has reported the results of all archaeological work through the *Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) database held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York.

A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in a suitable regional archaeological journal in due course.

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Source: "Geological Survey for England and Wales" website  
<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/GeologyOfBritain/viewer.html>.

ULAS. 2018 *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Attendance and Recording during Groundworks*. Site: Flores House, 34D High Street, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6AL  
ULAS 19-209

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21.08.2018

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## Appendix 1 OASIS data

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>	<b>Oasis No</b>	universi1- 326438		
	<b>Project Name</b>	Flores House		
	<b>Start/end dates of field work</b>	20.08.2018		
	<b>Previous/Future Work</b>	Not known		
	<b>Project Type</b>	Watching Brief		
	<b>Site Status</b>	Grade II* Listed Building		
	<b>Current Land Use</b>	Gardens		
	<b>Monument Type/Period</b>	None		
	<b>Significant Finds/Period</b>	None		
	<b>Development Type</b>	Garden building		
	<b>Reason for Investigation</b>	NPPF		
	<b>Position in the Planning Process</b>	Unknown		
<b>Planning Ref.</b>	2018/0644/FUL			
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	<b>Site Address/Postcode</b>	Flores House, 34D High Street, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6AL		
	<b>Study Area</b>	c.37.5m <sup>2</sup>		
	<b>Site Coordinates</b>	SK 86073 08727		
	<b>Height OD</b>	105m OD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Brief Originator</b>	Local Planning Authority – Rutland County Council		
	<b>Project Design Originator</b>	ULAS		
	<b>Project Manager</b>	Vicki Score		
	<b>Project Director/Supervisor</b>	Claire LaCombe		
	<b>Sponsor/Funding Body</b>	Professor John Feehally		
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVE</b>		<b>Physical</b>	<b>Digital</b>	<b>Paper</b>
	<b>Recipient</b>	Rutland County Museum	Rutland County Museum.	Rutland County Museum.
	<b>ID (Acc. No.)</b>		OAKRM:2018.24	OAKRM:2018.24
	<b>Contents</b>	None	Photos Survey data	Watching brief records Field Notes
<b>PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>Type</b>	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	<b>Title</b>	Archaeological Attendance and Recording during groundworks at Flores House, 34D High Street, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6AL		
	<b>Author</b>	LaCombe, C.		
	<b>Other bibliographic details</b>	ULAS Report No 2018-143		
	<b>Date</b>	2018		
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