

**An Archaeological Evaluation at
15-17, Gaol Street, Oakham, Rutland.**

NGR: 8596 0873

Steve Baker.


For: M.G. Evans & Co.

Checked by

Signed:  **Date:** ...11/9/2008

Name:Vicki Score

Approved by

Signed:  **.....Date:** 28/8/20008..

Name: R.J. Buckley

**University of Leicester
Archaeological Services**
University Rd., Leicester, LE1 7RH
Tel: (0116) 2522848 Fax: (0116) 2522614
www.le.ac.uk/ulas

**ULAS Report Number 2008-111
©2008 Accession Number OAKRM2008.57**

Contents.

Summary.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Geological and Topographical Background.....	2
Archaeological and Historical Background.	2
Historical Background	2
Listed Buildings	2
Archaeological Background.....	3
Prehistoric	3
Roman.....	3
Anglo-Saxon	3
Medieval.....	3
Post-Medieval	4
Archaeological Aims and Objectives.....	4
Methodology.....	5
General Methodology and Standards.....	5
Trial Trenching Methodology.....	6
Results and Interpretation	6
Trench 1.	6
Trench 2	7
Conclusion.....	8
Archive.....	8
Publication	8
Bibliography/References.....	9
Acknowledgements.....	10
Appendix 1: Photograph Archive.....	11
<i>Deborah Sawday</i>	<i>12</i>
The Pottery and other Finds	12
Appendix 2: Miscellaneous Finds from an Evaluation at Oakham.....	11

Figures

Figure 1: Site Location.....	1
Figure 2: Trench Layout	5
Figure 3: Trench 1, looking southeast, 2x1m scale.	7
Figure 4: Plan of trench 1.....	7
Figure 5: Trench 2, looking east, 1m scale	8

An Archaeological Evaluation by trial trenching of land at 15-17 Gaol Street, Oakham, Rutland (NGR 8596 0873).

Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching for M.G. Evans & Co on the 11th July 2008 on land at 15-17 Gaol Street, Oakham, Rutland (SP 8596 0873). The work was carried out as part of an impact assessment in advance of residential and commercial development. The evaluation revealed a post-medieval pit feature with pottery and a post hole feature of indeterminate date. No other archaeological deposits were identified. The finds and site archive will be deposited with Rutland County Museum under accession number OAKRM2008.57.

Introduction.

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by ULAS for M.G. Evans & Co on 11th July 2008 on land at 15-17 Gaol Street, Oakham, Rutland (SP 8596 0873).

The work was carried out following a request from Leicestershire County Council, as archaeological advisors to Rutland Planning Authority, who detailed the archaeological work required.

This report presents the results of the archaeological investigation by trial trenching and assesses the nature, extent, date and significance of any archaeological deposits identified.

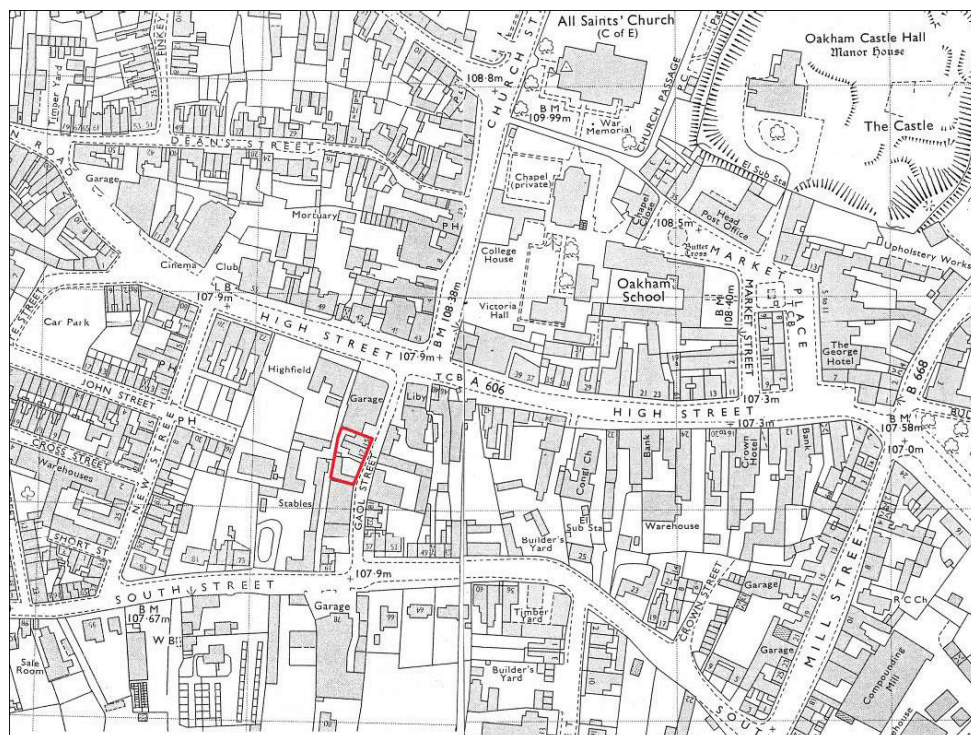


Figure 1: Site Location

© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100029495

Geological and Topographical Background.

The site lies 28km east of Leicester, in Oakham parish in the county of Rutland. The site, bounded by Gaol Street to the east and situated in the historic core of Oakham, close to the medieval All Saint's Church (**MLE5603**) and Oakham Castle (**MLE5569**) is within an area recognised as having archaeological potential (See Figure 1).

The proposed development involves the construction of four retail units and a cycle and bin storage facility at ground floor level and four flats above. The area lies at a height of approximately 107m O.D.

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain indicates the underlying geology of the area consists mainly of Marlstone, a mid-yellow brown ferruginous limestone brash (Geological Survey of England and Wales, Solid and Drift Geology, Sheet 157).

Archaeological and Historical Background.

The archaeological desk-based assessment undertaken by ULAS concluded that the area has a high potential for containing archaeological remains of a Saxon, medieval and post-medieval date and lower potential for remains of earlier periods. The development area is located within the Anglo-Saxon and medieval core of Oakham (**MLE9904**) and is adjacent to the location of the County Gaol (**MLE16843**) and an area on Gaol Street where post-medieval finds were previously recovered (**MLE15944** and **MLE15943**). Archaeological work carried out in close proximity to the site has revealed remains of commercial and industrial activities dating from the early-medieval to the modern period (**MLE10235**).

Historical Background.

Oakham is mentioned in the Domesday Book as land that was held by King William following the Norman Conquest and also shows that the settlement was served by a priest and church, perhaps a predecessor to the church of All Saints. The earliest date for a church made from stone on the site of the present All Saints is from the late 12th century and rebuilding continued to occur into the late 14th or 15th Century. The church and some land was granted to Westminster Abbey by William II (1087-1100) but the manor and Oakham Castle remained in royal hands and the town grew under its patronage. By the 12th century it had a market and prosperity in the 14th and 15th centuries was due to the wool trade.

Listed Buildings.

There are a number of listed buildings close to the development site.

64 High Street (**DLE5383**) is an 18th-century structure made of red and blue chequered brick, bearing a stone slate roof, three hipped dormers and a stone band. It comprises two stories and attics. The building is located immediately north of the development area. Very close to the development area is the Women's Institute Room (**DLE5827**), a one-storey early 18th century meeting house, in coursed ironstone with a stone slate roof. The gable end to the street of this building has a small date stone inscribed 'R.N. 1714' under a moulded cornice. This was formerly a Quaker meeting house.

On the opposite side of Gaol street are two further listed buildings. The Rutland County Library (**DLE6580**) dates from the early 19th century and is a two storey structure made of brick and tiles, the modern entrance of which is on Gaol Street (1924). 44 and 44a High Street (**DLE5829**) is a two-storey house and shop originally dating to the early 18th century and constructed from chequered red and blue brick with a double roof of slates.

Archaeological Background.

Details of relevant sites are listed on the Historical Environment Record for Leicestershire and Rutland.

Prehistoric.

Finds from fieldwalking and elsewhere have identified prehistoric sites in Oakham and its vicinity. An early Bronze Age find was located at 52 Stamford Road, 700m to the east (**MLE6424**); a beehive quern, dating to the late Iron Age or early Roman (**MLE6595**) was found near Oakham station in 1900, 500m to the north-west ; an Iron Age find was located at Oakham Castle, 500m to the north-east (**MLE6529**); a Neolithic flint axe was found down Dean's Lane in 1906, 180m to the north (**MLE7311**); a Neolithic stone axe was found at the college (**MLE7312**) and a Neolithic stone implement was found at 45 Warn crescent (**MLE7314**) both within 1km to the west.

Roman.

Roman activity in the town of Oakham is represented by finds discovered. Two archaeological sites dating to the Roman period have been located in the vicinity of the development area. Evaluation trenches at Church Hall, c.300m to the north, revealed a scatter of Roman features, some of them associated with pottery suggesting occupation (**MLE5623**). Several fragments of Roman pottery and tile and a carved plaster head of possible Roman date have been found within the castle precinct c.500m to the north-west (**MLE8109**).

Anglo-Saxon.

Sherds of early Anglo-Saxon pottery were found during trial trenching north-west of the Castle Hall (**MLE6240**). Samples from a cellar, in the area of the castle, at 3 Choir Close, revealed two sherds of late Anglo-Saxon pottery (**MLE9405**).

Projects on South Street, in the 1990s, located archaeological deposits. These included remains of a sunken-featured building and pottery dating to the 5th and 6th century representing the first evidence of early Saxon settlement in Oakham (**MLE9902**); a pit complex and a trench containing Saxo-Norman Stamford ware; a cess pit containing 11th century pottery and a large ditch, running parallel to South Street, containing residual sherds of Roman, Saxon, Saxo-Norman and medieval pottery (**MLE9903**). A watching brief at 39 Northgate, 350m to the north, identified a shallow pit and two possible ditches with associated Stamford ware pottery (**MLE10228**).

Medieval.

A number of sites of medieval archaeology have been recorded in the vicinity of the development area. Flore's house, a Grade II listed building is located c.120m to the east and dates largely to the 13th and 14th century (**MLE5567**).

Oakham Castle lies 500m to the north-east of the development area. The earthworks of an earlier motte and bailey castle at the same location and listed in the Scheduled Ancient Monuments records (SAM 17018) have been assigned an early medieval date (**MLE5569**). There is also an early medieval aisled hall house (**MLE5570**) and the Castle Hall which has been used as a court house from the 13th century(**MLE9900**). There are fishponds (**MLE5572**) and garden features (**MLE5573**) associated with the medieval phases of the castle. The chapel at the hospital of St. John the Evangelist and St. Anne's survives and dates from 1398 and is located c.250m to the north-west (**MLE5601**). All Saint's Church is a medieval church with a 14th century tower and found 250m to the north (**MLE5603**), close to College House, 150m to the north, a medieval building of king post construction with early 14th century roof timbers (**MLE5607**).

A watching brief in 1992 at High Street revealed a pit containing 33 sherds of Stamford ware dating to the late 11th century (**MLE5621**) and two pits containing early medieval pottery were recorded at 49a High Street in 1994 (**MLE5912**). A number of pits were revealed by archaeological evaluation in the area of Springfield Park in 1998 (SK861098) These were dated to the 12th and 13th century.

Post-Medieval.

Post-medieval archaeological sites are located within the vicinity of the development site. Rutland stone footings were found beneath 33-37 High Street, 120m to the north-east (**MLE9404**); a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM163), the Butter Cross, is a large polygonal structure probably dating to the 17th century and is located c.180m to the north-east (**MLE5578**) and the Manor House at 1 Northgate is a two-storey ironstone house with a thatched roof dating from the early 17th century, c.250m to the northeast (**MLE5615**).

Archaeological investigation in 2007 revealed post-medieval/modern features in Church Street including possible wells, pits and postholes (**MLE16609**) Until 2007, 4 Church Street was a cottage (used as a baker's shop) with bakehouse, flour store, cart shed and stable block (**MLE16608**). The cottage dated back to the early/mid 18th century but was rebuilt in the mid 19th century. The bakehouse, link building and flour stores were 18th-19th century in date and were demolished in 2007.

Archaeological Aims and Objectives.

The main aims of the evaluation were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent, date range and environmental potential for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed development.
- To sample excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the ground works.
- To assess the local, regional and national importance of any deposits.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

The principle objective of the evaluation was to gather sufficient information to ensure that an informed planning decision may be taken in respect of archaeological issues and to assess whether any further stages of archaeological investigation might be required as a condition of planning permission.

Methodology.

General Methodology and Standards.

All work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) Code of Conduct and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (1999).

Staffing, recording systems, health and safety provisions and insurance details are included below.

Internal monitoring procedures were put in place to provide for visits to site by the project manager. These ensured that the project targets were met and professional standards maintained. Provision was also made for external monitoring meetings with the Planning authority and the Client, if this was required.



Figure 2: Trench Layout

Trial Trenching Methodology.

Due to the dimensions of the site, the position of the existing buildings and the associated health and safety and accessibility issues, two trial trenches were excavated in level spits using a mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket under continuous archaeological supervision. This covered 24sq metres or 2% of the proposed development area. The topsoil and overlying layers were removed until the top of the archaeology or the undisturbed substratum was reached to a maximum of 1m in depth. Trenches were examined for archaeological deposits or finds by hand cleaning, recorded and tied into the national grid before being backfilled at the end of the evaluation.

Results and Interpretation.

Trench 1.

This trench was orientated on a north-west to south-east alignment across the open yard area of the development site. It was 11m long and 1.5m in width with a maximum depth of 0.67m and a minimum of 0.51m and ran diagonally from the eastern side of the yard. The uppermost deposit comprised a mixed and disturbed modern hardcore and rubble overburden approximately 0.60m in depth. This was interpreted as support for the modern hardstanding within the courtyard. Beneath this overburden was a 0.40m thick deposit of clayey-silt with occasional charcoal flecks, occasional clay pipe fragments and modern glazed ceramics. This deposit lay directly above the natural, an eroded ironstone, seen at the maximum depth of 0.60m from the ground surface. After hand cleaning, a number of features were tentatively identified.

A single post-medieval pit was recorded mid-way along the trench and may represent a backfilled waste pit (See figure 5, Appendix). The backfill was identical to the subsoil overlying the natural. A single post hole measuring approximately 0.30m in diameter and 0.30m deep was recorded in the north end of the trench but contained no datable ceramics. Two further features, a stake hole in the south of the trench and a small posthole in the north end of the trench were reinterpreted as the natural products of bioturbation, either floral root action or animal burrowing. No significant archaeological features or deposits were encountered (See Figure 3).



Figure 3: Trench 1, looking southeast, 2x1m scale.

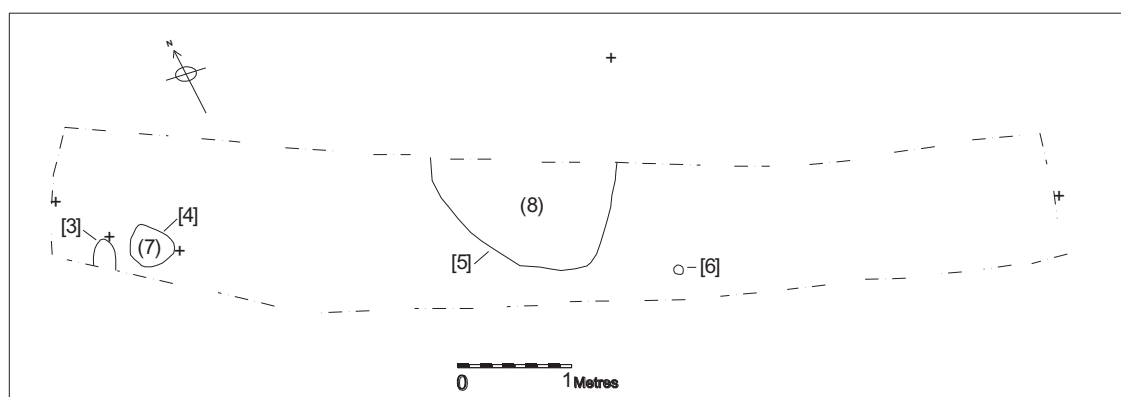


Figure 4: Plan of trench 1

Trench 2.

This was orientated west-north-west by east-south-east and ran parallel to the structure on the west side of the courtyard. The trench was excavated to a maximum of 1m and measured 2m x 4.5m. Deposits comparable to those in trench 1 were observed. After hand cleaning, the base of the trench revealed no archaeological features or deposits (See Figure 4).



Figure 5: Trench 2, looking east, 1m scale

Conclusion.

The trial trenches excavated within the footprint of the proposed structures revealed no evidence for the presence of significant archaeological deposits.

Archive.

A full copy of the archive as defined in the Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for long-term storage (UKIC 1990), 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 objects) (Roman finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700, 1993) will usually be presented within six months of the completion of the fieldwork. This archive will include all written, drawn and photographic records relating to the investigations undertaken.

The archive consists of site notes and indices, digital prints, archive records and finds and will be deposited with Rutland County Museum under accession number OAKRM2008.57.

Publication.

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society 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.

INFORMATION REQUIRED	EXAMPLE
Project Name	An Archaeological evaluation by trial trenching of land at 15-17 Gaol Street, Oakham, Rutland.
Project Type	Evaluation.
Project Manager	Richard Buckley.
Project Supervisor	Steve Baker.
Previous/Future work	
Current Land Use	Courtyard.
Development Type	Residential, Commercial.
Reason for Investigation	PPG16
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition.
Site Co ordinates	NGR: 8596 0873
Start/end dates of field work	11/07/2008
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council.
Study Area *	24sq metres.

Bibliography/References.

Chapman, S. (2001) *An Archaeological Watching Brief at Knights Electrical Shop, 33-37a High Street, Oakham, Rutland. (SK 856 087)*. ULAS Report number 2001-001.

Clarke, C. (2007) *4-6 Church Street, Oakham, Rutland: An Archaeological Evaluation Report*.

Harvey, J. (2004) *An Archaeological Watching Brief at 78 South Street, Oakham, Rutland (SK 8588 0860)*. ULAS Report number 2004-142.

James, G. (1998) *An Archaeological Evaluation at Springfield Park, Oakham, Leicestershire (SK 861 098)*. ULAS Report number 1998-091.

Page, W. (1935) *The Victorian History of the County of Rutland*.

Acknowledgements.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Steve Baker and Dan Stone. The project was managed by Richard Buckley.

Appendix 1: Photograph Archive.



Figure 6: Posthole feature, Trench 1, 0.50m scale.



Figure 7: Working shot, excavation of trench 1.

APPENDIX: MISCELLANEOUS FINDS FROM AN EVALUATION AT OAKHAM.

Deborah Sawday

The Pottery and other Finds

The pottery, 2 sherds, weighing 27 grams, was catalogued with reference to the ULAS fabrics Series (Sawday 1989). Clay pipe and animal bone was also recovered – see below (table 1).

A date in the 17th century, possibly the latter half, is suggested by the pottery and the clay pipe in context 8 [5].

Bibliography

Green, M., 1984. *Clay Tobacco Pipes and Pipe Makers of Leicester*. Leicester.,
Higgins, D.A., 1985. 'Leicester Clay Tobacco Pipes' in P.J. Davey (ed.) *The Archaeology of the Clay Tobacco Pipe*, Vol. IX, 291-307. Oxford: Brit. Archaeol. Rep. (Brit. Ser.) 146.
Sawday, D., 1989. 'The post Roman pottery' in J.N. Lucas, 'An excavation in the north east quarter of Leicester: Elbow Lane, 1977', *Trans. Leicestershire Archaeol. and Hist. Soc.* **63**, 18-47 (28-41).

Site/ Parish: 15-77 Gaol Street, Oakham	Submitter: S. Baker
Accession No.: OAKRM 2008.57	Identifier: D. Sawday
Document Ref: oakham2.doc	Date of Identification: 26.8.08
Material: pot & misc finds	Method of recovery: evaluation
Site Type: town core	Job Number: 08/218

Table 1: The finds.

Context	Fabric/Ware	Nos.	Grams	Comments
POTTERY				
8 [5]	MY – Midland Yellow ware	2	27	Hollow ware, glazed with inscribed horizontal lines on the shoulder, c.1500-1750
CLAY PIPE				
8 [5]		1		Pipe bowl and part of stem, unmarked, flat base, rim broken off, sooted/burnt, similar Green 1984, no.127, Higgins 1985, fig.4.544-51, c.1630-1660..
8 [5]		1		Pipe bowl 'Midland

				spur type', similar Higgins 1985, fig.1.2-17, late 17 th C.
8 [5]		11		Clay pipe stems
ANIMAL BONE				(J. Browning pers. comm.)
7 [4]		1		Calf jaw
8 [5]		1		Cattle metatarsal, gnawed at both ends.