



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Watching
Brief at Cutts Close, Oakham,
Rutland**

NGR: SK 861 090

Jon Coward



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Brief at Cutts Close,
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For: Oakham Town Council and English Heritage

Checked by

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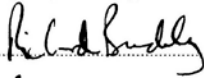


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An Archaeological Watching Brief at Cutts Close, Oakham, Rutland (SK 861 090)

Jon Coward

1. Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services were commissioned by Oakham Town Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief in Jan 2010 during the excavation of a trench for additional street lighting at Cutts Close, Oakham. The area is next to the site of Oakham Motte and Bailey castle and is within the scheduled monument (No 17018). No archaeological deposits were observed during the course of the work. The archive will be deposited with Rutland County Council (accession number OAKRM: 2010.8)

2. Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services were commissioned by Oakham Town Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief adjacent to Oakham motte and bailey castle (SK 861 0 90; Scheduled Monument 17018) during the excavation of a trench to lay cables for additional street lighting along Church Passage footpath.

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. All work followed the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS 1997), the Institute for Archaeologists' (IfA) *Code of Conduct* and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological watching briefs* (2008).

3. Archaeological and historical background

The town of Oakham itself is of Anglo-Saxon origin (HER Ref: MLE9904), with the placename derived from the Old English Ocham (A.D 1067) or Ocheham (A.D 1086) meaning Homestead or enclosure of a man called Oc(c)a' (Mills 2003). The manor and castle of Oakham, part of the dowry of the Anglo-Saxon queens of England, came to Edith wife of Edward the Confessor in the mid 11th century. The manor was held by William the Conqueror in 1075. Domesday also shows that the settlement was served by a priest and church, perhaps a predecessor to the largely Decorated and Perpendicular All Saints (Morgan 1979). Albert the Clerk held, under the King, the churches of Oakham, Hambleton and Stamford with associated lands. Although the church and some land were granted to Westminster Abbey by William II (1087-1100), the manor, including the castle, remained in royal hands. It was held by Henry Beaumont, first Earl of Warwick, in the early 12th century, probably passing to the Ferrers family about 1119.

The town grew under the patronage of the castle and had a market by 1249. Its 14th and 15th century prosperity was due to the wool trade. Its late 17th and early 18th century buildings may be connected with the wealth of the then lord of the manor, Daniel Finch, Earl of Nottingham (Page 1935).

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. The motte was substantial, 37'6" wide and 18'3" deep, and surrounded an earth rampart that formed the early defences of the castle (MLE5574). The motte is still visible in the corner of the ramparts, but the outside edges have been cut away. At Oakham Castle is also an early medieval aisled hall house (MLE5570). Oakham Castle Hall has been used as a court house since the early 13th century and solely as such from at least the 16th century (MLE9900). A stone curtain wall replaced the earthen rampart at Oakham Castle sometime in the 13th or 14th century, located to the north-east (MLE9901). All Saints Church is a large medieval church with a 14th century tower, located 250m to the north (MLE5603; DLE5304), close to College House, which is a medieval building of king-post construction with an early 14th century roof timbers, located c.150m to the north (MLE5607). There is reference to the chapel in the area in an inquisition of 1340 (MLE5571).

4. Aims

The aims of the watching brief were:

1. To identify the presence/absence of any earlier building phases or archaeological deposits.
2. To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed groundworks.
3. To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
4. To produce an archive and report of any results.

5. Methodology

Contractors hired by Oakham Town Council excavated a trench 250mm wide, 450mm deep and approximately 60 metres long. A mini digger equipped with a toothless bucket carried out the trenching under continuous archaeological supervision. Once a stretch was declared clear by the attendant archaeologist, the cable pipe was installed and the trench backfilled.

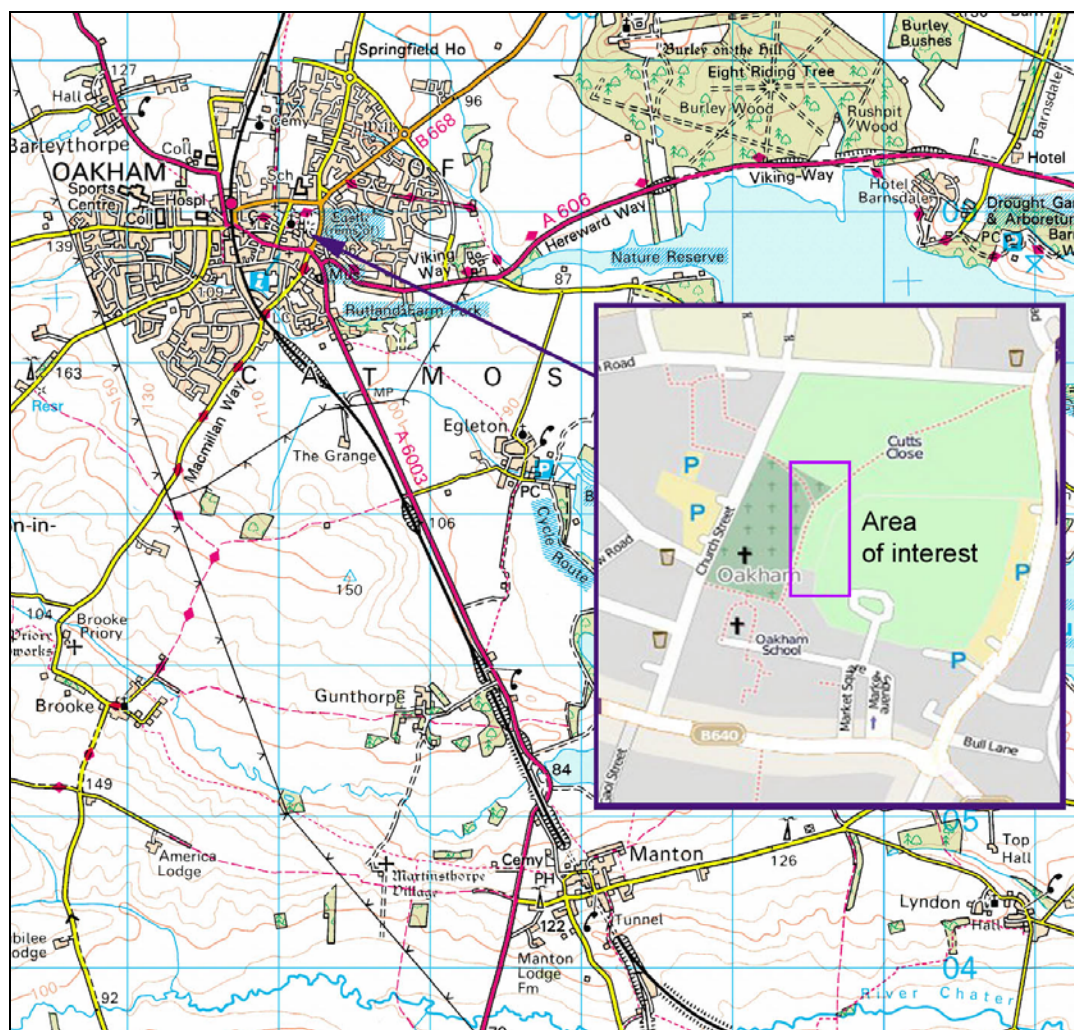


Figure 1 Location of Site

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6. Results

6.1 The southern and central extent (Figure 2)

From the disused modern brick conveniences to the east of Church Passage northwards to the Shakespeare Centre Grammar school, the trench was cutting garden soil or made-up ground. In places, a beige brown sandy clay was encountered at the very base of the trench, which could be natural ground. Various modern material was disturbed by the trenching, including modern ceramic building material (CBM), glass, and glazed blue transfer wares from the 19th or 20th century. Some concrete paving slabs were also disturbed along the line of the trench. At approximately the southern edge of the Grammar school the trench was encountering a higher proportion of building rubble, including some local unshaped and unmortared ferruginous limestone fragments, indicating either a discreet dump of debris, or perhaps the presence of a demolished building in the vicinity.

6.2 The northern extent

As the trench was excavated to the north of the Grammar school, the lie of the land dips sharply down to the level of the Recreation Ground; here, the presumed modern overburden and make-up ceased. Beneath the turf, the trench was cutting a light brown sandy clay, with much root presence, which had the appearance of being natural ground. No finds nor features were observed along this lower stretch.

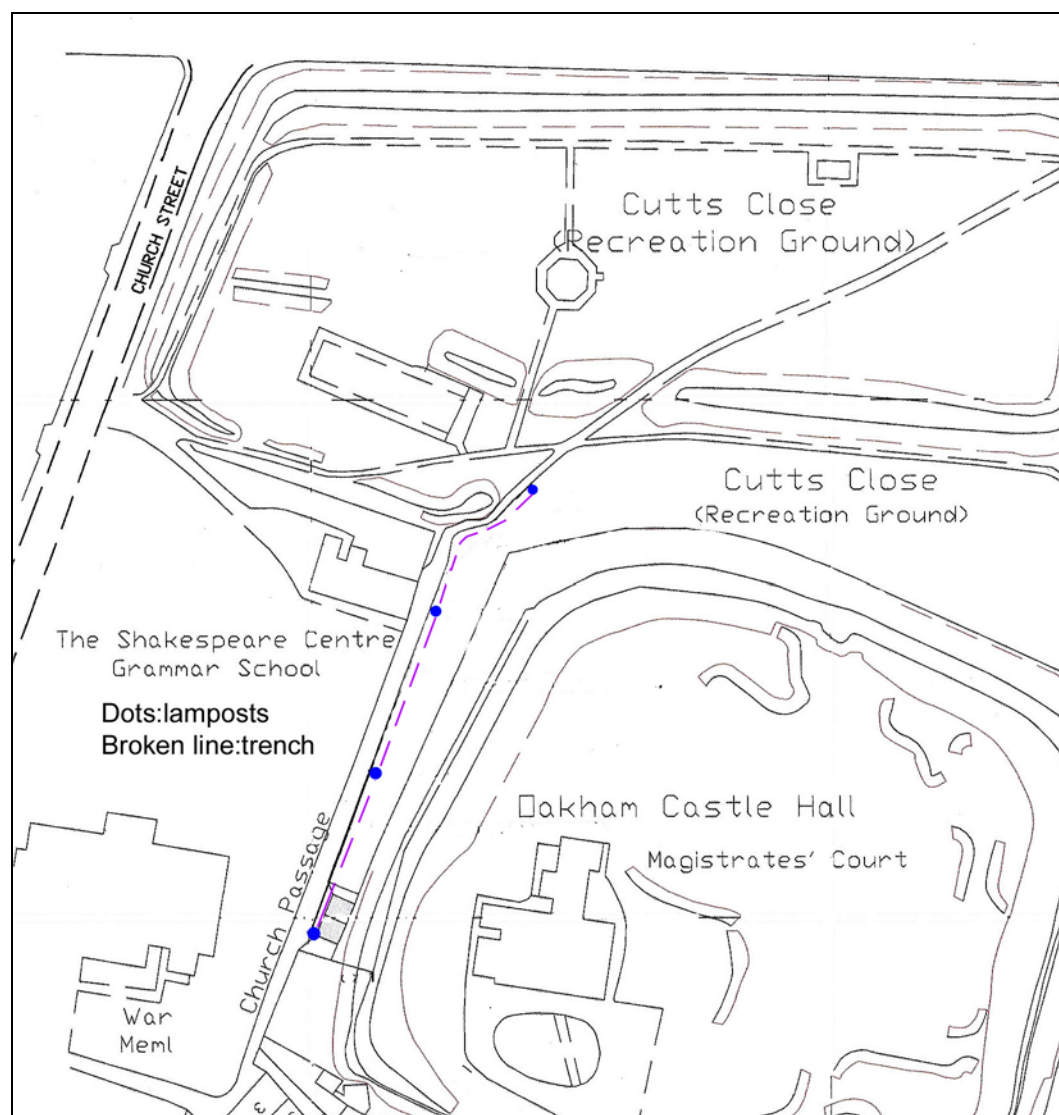


Figure 2 Position of trenching covered by Watching Brief.

NTS, based on a plan supplied by Oakham Town Council

7. Conclusion

No archaeological deposits were encountered during the monitoring of the cable trench. To the south the area showed evidence of modern disturbance with the presence of made-ground and modern finds while to the north the natural substratum was present immediately below the topsoil.

8. Archive

The site archive consists of a *pro-forma* watching brief sheet, and three digital images. It will be deposited with Rutland County Council under accession number OAKRM: 2010.8

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	OASIS entry summary
Project Name	Cutts Close, Oakham
Summary	University of Leicester Archaeological Services were commissioned by Oakham Town Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief in Jan 2010 during the excavation of a trench for additional street lighting at Cutts Close, Oakham. The area is next to the site of Oakham Motte and Bailey castle and is within the scheduled monument (No 17018). No archaeological deposits were observed during the course of the work.
Project Type	Watching brief
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Jon Coward
Previous/Future work	Previous: none. / Future: uncertain.
Current Land Use (2009)	Park
Development Type	Service installation
Reason for Investigation	Part of Scheduled monument consent
Position in the Planning Process	as a condition
Site Co ordinates	SK 862 089
Start/end dates of field work	21/01/2010 – 22/01/2010
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services
Study Area	60 linear metres
Associated project reference codes	Museum accession ID: OAKRM: 2010.8 OASIS form ID:

9. Acknowledgements

The watching brief was carried out by Jon Coward, and project management was by Patrick Clay, of ULAS. ULAS would like to thank Richard White of Oakham Town Council for his assistance.

10. Bibliography

Mills, A. D., 2003 'Oakham' in *A Dictionary of British Place-Names*. Oxford University Press. Oxford Reference Online. Oxford University Press.

Morgan, P, (editor) 1979 *Domesday Book 22 Leicestershire*, Phillimore and Co. Ltd

Page, W., 1935 The Victoria History of the County of Rutland

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Figure 3 Cable trench under excavation

Appendix 1: The Design Specification

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for archaeological watching brief

**Cutts Close, Oakham, Rutland
(SK 861 090)**

Planning Authority: Rutland County Council

For: Oakham Town Council and English Heritage

1. Definition and scope of the specification

1.1 This specification is for archaeological watching brief during groundworks for the installation of four new street lights in Cutts Close Oakham, within the scheduled area of Oakham Castle (Scheduled Monument no. 17018). This will entail digging a 450mm deep trench to provide cabling.

1.2 It addresses the requirements for archaeological monitoring from English Heritage

1.3 All archaeological work will adhere to the Institute for Archaeologist's (IfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological watching briefs* and the *Guidelines and procedures for archaeological work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (Leicestershire County Council).

2. Background

2.1. The proposed groundworks for the installation of four new street lights in Cutts Close Oakham, This is within the scheduled area of Oakham Castle, a scheduled monument (17018). A watching brief with control of machining is now required to ensure any archaeological remains impacted on by the development are recorded as appropriate.

3 Aims

3.1 Through archaeological attendance with control and supervision:

1. To identify the presence/absence of any earlier building phases or archaeological deposits.
2. To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed groundworks.
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 overburden removal and other groundworks by an experienced professional archaeologist during the works specified above.

4.2 Should significant archaeological remains be identified a programme of excavation and recording may be necessary, using additional personnel as appropriate.

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

4.4 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.

4.5 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.

4.6 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.

4.7 Any human remains encountered will be initially left in situ and only be removed under a Ministry of Justice Licence and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations. The developer, planning authority and English Heritage will be informed immediately on their discovery.

4.8 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 from the client, planning authority and English Heritage.

4.9 In the event of significant archaeological remains being located during the watching brief there may be the need for additional 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 client, planning authority and English Heritage. If the archaeological remains are identified to be of significance additional contingent archaeological works will 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 An accession number will be drawn prior to the commencement of the project (Brief 8.1). Following the fieldwork the on-line OASIS form at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis> will be completed. A report on the investigation will be provided following the groundworks.

6.2 Copies will be provided for the client, Historic Environment Record and English Heritage. 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 Brown (2008) will be presented to Rutland County Council, 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 investigation is due to commence at the start of the contractors groundworks currently scheduled for w.c 18.01.2010. An experienced archaeologist will be present during this work.

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 (revised 2007) 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 St Pauls Travellers Policy No. UCPOP3651237 while the Professional Indemnity Insurance is with Lloyds Underwriters (50%) and Brit Insurances (50%) Policy No. FUNK3605.

11. Bibliography

Brown, D., *Standard and guidance for the preparation of Archaeological Archives*
2008 (Institute for Archaeologists)

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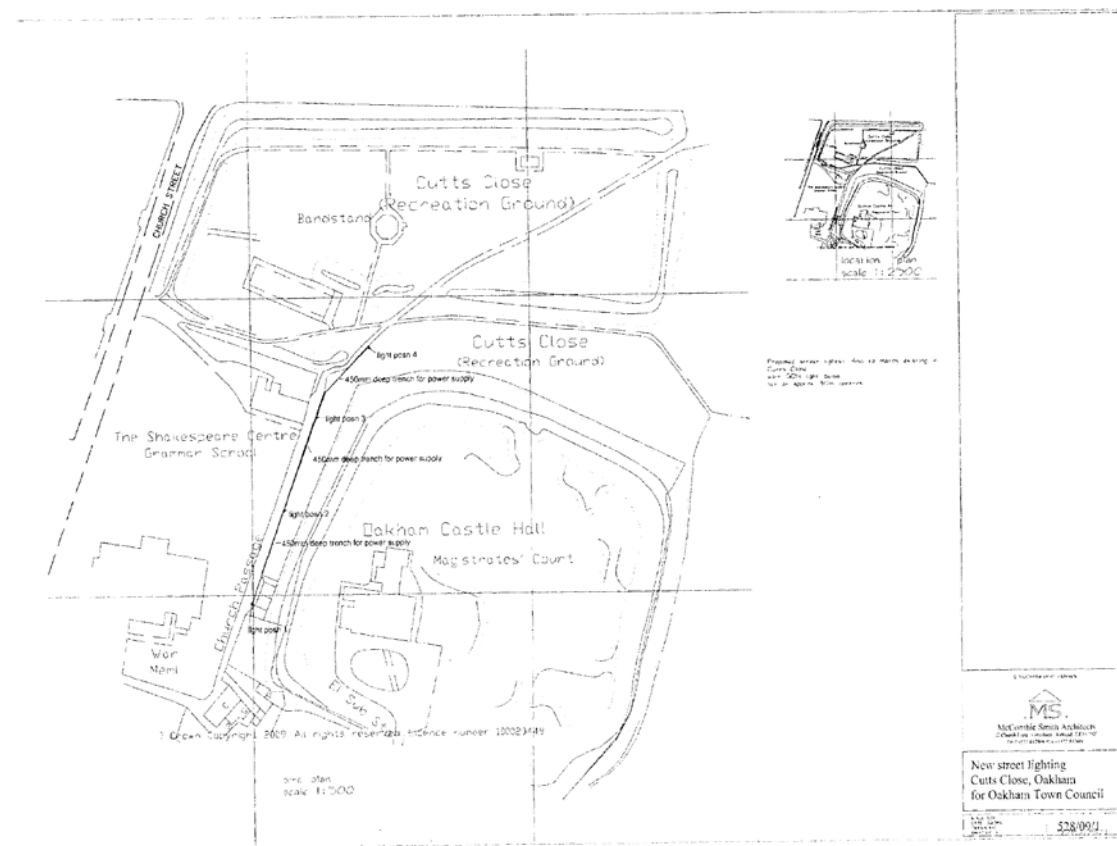


Figure 1 Site location

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