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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Watching
Brief at the Play Area,
Cutts Close, Oakham,
Rutland SK 8609 0903**

Jon Coward



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**An Archaeological Watching Brief at the Play Area, Cutts
Close, Oakham, Rutland SK 8609 0903**

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For: Rutland County Council and English Heritage

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OAKRM.2010.26

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1. Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by ULAS at Cutts Close, Oakham, Rutland, SK 8609 0903 in August 2010 for Rutland County Council and English Heritage, during groundworks associated with the installation of play equipment. Most of the area appeared to be reinstated ground, probably in connection with a large storm sewer running under the area. No archaeological features were noted, nor any artefacts earlier than the 19th century. The archive will be deposited with Rutland County Museum under accession code OAKRM.2010.26 in due course.

2. Background

Groundworks were carried out in connection with the installation of extra play equipment at Cutts Close, within the scheduled area of Oakham Castle, a Scheduled Monument (17018), in August 2010 (Figure 1, Figure 2). 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. 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

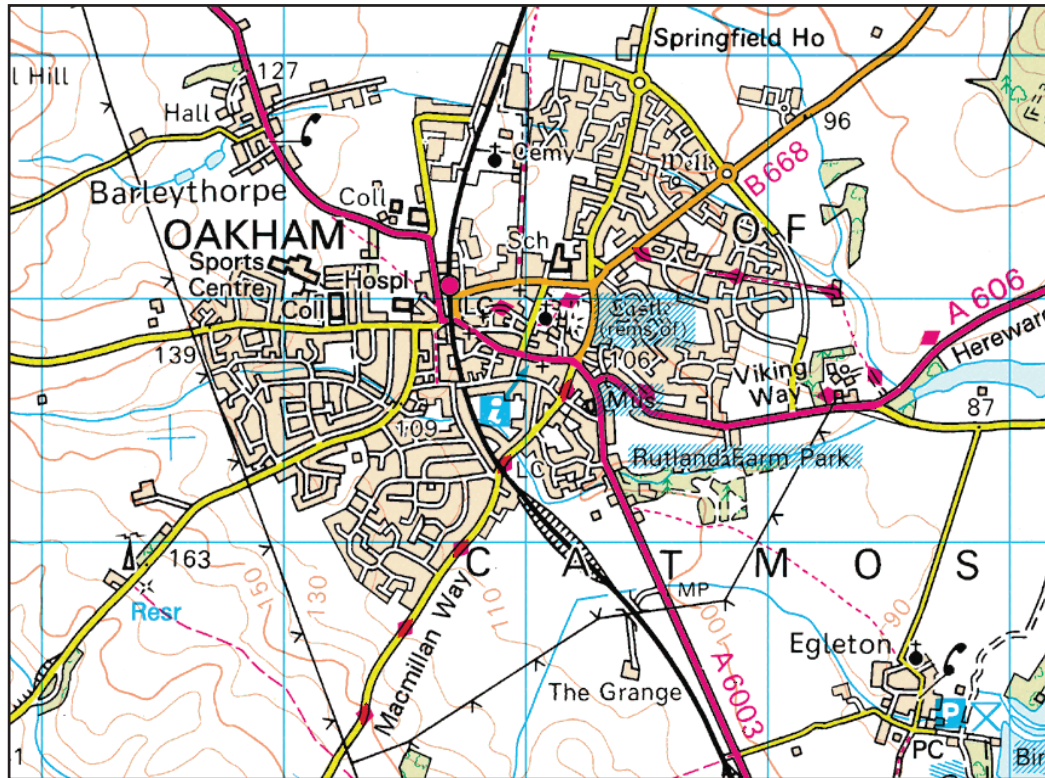


Figure 1 Oakham, Rutland. Oakham Castle area is shaded in blue.

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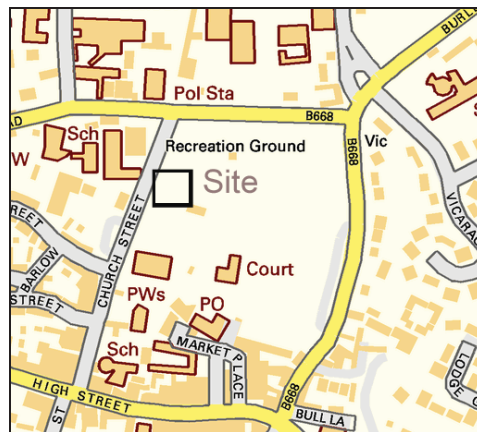


Figure 2 Area of interest

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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**). The earliest

phase of the castle was a motte and bailey 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. There is also an early medieval aisled hall house (**MLE5570**; Clough 1999). 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 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 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 fieldwork were:

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

5 Methods

The footings for the three pieces of equipment were hand-dug. Footings 1-5 were c. 0.30m in diameter and 0.60m in depth. Footing 6 was 0.50m by 0.50m by 0.90m depth; footing 7 was 1.40m by 0.60m by 0.40m depth. All the equipment was within a flattish low area, immediately to the west of an existing tarmac and fenced play area (Figure 3).

6. Results

Footings 1-5 were dug through ground that appeared to have been redeposited comprising a reddish brown clay loam topsoil. Footings 2 and 3 identified a greyish beige clay at a depth of 0.50m. It is possible that this represents the top of the subsoil. Modern material such as plastic and decimal coinage was encountered in the topsoil. The location for the equipment was moved slightly, as excavation of the initial footing revealed a large salt-glazed storm drain at c.0.50m depth, and the whole installation was shifted approximately 0.50m to the south to avoid this. The storm drain ran approximately east-west towards a manhole on the west edge of the low-lying area.

Footing 6 was on slightly higher ground, and although the topsoil was similar to that encountered in footings 1-5, subsoil was encountered at 0.25m below the surface that

consisted of decayed ironstone and limestone fragments in a sand and clay soil matrix. Beneath this, at 0.45m depth, natural greyish brown clay silt substrata were encountered. A single lump of ironstone recovered from the subsoil was square-edged, and showed possible dressing marks on one side. It measured 0.40m by 0.25m and although there was no sign of mortar, it may have been used (or intended) as masonry.

Footing 7 also exhibited a topsoil and subsoil similar to that in footing 6, excepting the south edge where the subsoil appeared to have been cut by the backfill for a metallic pipe which was running east-west, fortuitously just below formation depth. No natural substrata were encountered by formation depth of 0.40m.

No archaeological features were encountered in the footings, and with the exception of the possible masonry fragment, no finds.

7. Discussion

The large drain encountered would have entailed a wide trench being dug and backfilled, so the probability is that an area of a metre or so in width along the length of the pipe has been truncated. Footings 6 and 7 seem to be outside the footprint of this disturbance, and possibly the clay encountered near the base of footings 2 and 3 indicates the southern extent of the disturbance. A council official noted that there had been a children's paddling pool in the area at some unspecified time in the past. The manhole inspection cover was lifted to ascertain the line of the drain in the course of the work, it should be noted that the drain appears to continue westwards, heading straight for the outer bailey rampart and the road beyond.

8. Archive

The archive consists of:

- 2 *pro-forma* watching brief sheets
- 1 sheet of monochrome negatives
- 1 sheet of contact prints
- 7 digital colour images

No finds were retained. The archive will be deposited with Rutland Museum Service under accession code OAKRM.2010.26 in due course.



Figure 3 Play equipment footings etc.

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 Rutland County Council and the contractors who carried out the work for their assistance.

10. Bibliography

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- Heard, H., 2005 *Geophysical Survey Report, Oakham Castle, Rutland* Stratascan 2005
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11. Appendix 1: Design Specification

Design Specification for archaeological watching brief

***Cutts Close, Oakham, Rutland
(SK 8609 0903)***

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 play equipment in Cutts Close Oakham, within the scheduled area of Oakham Castle (Scheduled Monument no. 17018). This will entail digging three foundations for three items.

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 three items of play equipment 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://www.oasis.ac.uk>. 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. 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* (Institute for
2008 Archaeologists)

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16.07.2010

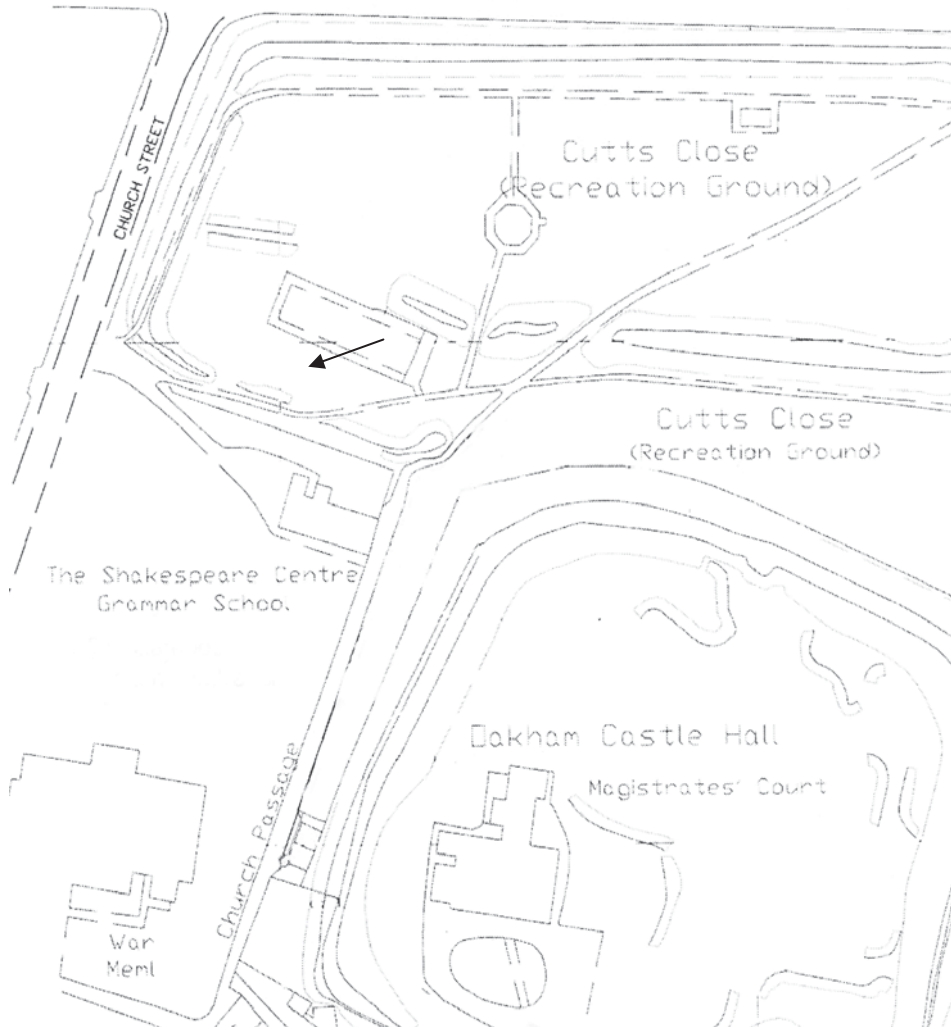


Fig 1 Site location showing proposed location of play equipment (arrowed)

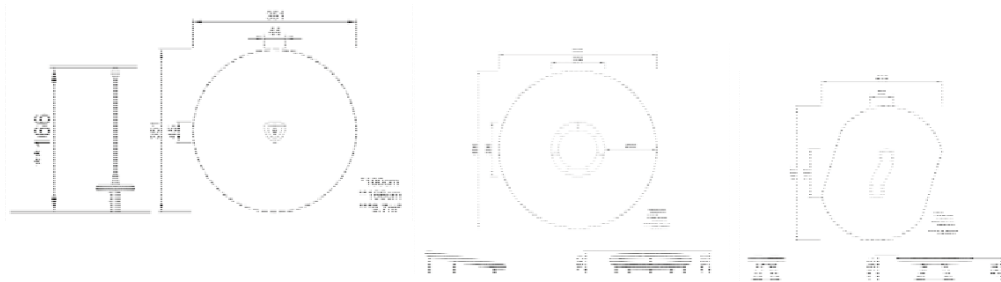


Fig. 2 Plans and elevations of the play equipment.

Project Health and Safety Policy Statement

Play Area, Cutts Close, Oakham, Rutland (SK 8609 0903)

1. Nature of the work

1.1 This statement is for a watching brief. It will be revised following the commencement of operations when the extent of risks can be assessed in full.

1.2 The work will involve machine dug trenching 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 Standing Committee of Archaeological Unit Managers manual, as revised in 1997, together with the following relevant Health and Safety guidelines, including the following.

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

1.3 The Health and Safety policy on site will be reassessed during the evaluation. All work will adhere to the company's health and safety policy.

2 Risks Assessment

2.1 Working within an excavation.

Precautions. No work will be undertaken beneath section faces deeper than 1.2m. Loose spoil heaps will not be walked on. Protective footwear 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.

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 Weils 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.

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

06.01.2010

12. Appendix 2: Oasis Data

INFORMATION REQUIRED	EXAMPLE
Project Name	Oakham Cutts Close, Play equipment
Project Type	Watching Brief
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Jon Coward
Previous/Future work	N/A
Current Land Use	Recreation
Development Type	Recreation
Reason for Investigation	Scheduled monument
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition
Site Co ordinates	SK 8609 0903
Start/end dates of field work	August 2010
Archive Recipient	Rutland County Museun
Study Area *	100 sq m

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