



# Northamptonshire Archaeology

## Archaeological evaluation at Rockingham Castle Northamptonshire March 2012



### Northamptonshire Archaeology

2 Bolton House  
Wootton Hall Park  
Northampton NN4 8BE  
t. 01604 700493 f. 01604 702822  
e. [sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk)  
w. [www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk)



Northamptonshire  
County Council

Carol Simmonds

Report 12/40

March 2012



**STAFF**

Project Manager: Steve Parry MA, MIfA, FSA

Text and illustrations: Carol Simmonds BA PIfA

Fieldwork: Carol Simmonds

Simon Markus BA

**QUALITY CONTROL**

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	Pat Chapman		
Verified by	Iain Soden		
Approved by	Andy Chapman		

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Thanks are extended to the owners of Rockingham Castle and estate workers for their assistance during the works

**OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project title	Archaeological evaluation at Rockingham Castle, Northamptonshire, March 2012	
Short description	An archaeological evaluation of part of the gardens at Rockingham Castle, Northamptonshire, was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in March 2012. The works followed an evaluation, desk-based assessment and buildings recording of the walled garden in 2011. The evaluation revealed made ground in the northern part of the site, where an artificial terrace for the 19th-century garden had been created. A small portion of a path and a short length of brick wall associated with the walled garden were recorded.	
Project type	Trial trench evaluation	
Site Status	Near to SM13638 and EH register parks and gardens	
Previous work	Trial trenching (Prentice 2011)	
Current land use	Garden, scrub land	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type and period	19th and 20th century garden deposits, path and wall	
Significant finds	None	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Rockingham Castle, Rockingham, near Corby	
Post code		
OS co-ordinates	SP 86851 91046 & SP 86741 90937	
Area (sq m/ha)	0.5ha	
Height aOD	125m	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)	
Project brief originator	None	
Project Design originator	NA	
Director/Supervisor	Carol Simmonds (NA)	
Project Manager	Steve Parry (NA)	
Sponsor or funding body	Rockingham Castle Estate	
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>		
Start date	5th March 2012	
End date	6th March 2012	
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location (Accession no.)</b>	<b>Contents</b>
Physical	NA store	none
Paper	ROC12	Site records (1 small archive box)
Digital		Client report PDF
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)	
Title	Archaeological evaluation at Rockingham Castle, Northamptonshire, March 2012	
Serial title & volume	NA report 12/40	
Author(s)	Carol Simmonds	
Page numbers	17 pages text and illustrations	
Date	12th March 2012	

---

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>2.1 Topography and geology</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>2.2 Historical and archaeological background</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>4.1 Trench 3</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>4.2 Trench 4</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>9</b>
	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>10</b>

## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY

### Figures

Front Cover: General view of the excavation of Trench 3, looking south-east

- Fig 1: Site location, 1:15,000  
Fig 2: Trench locations, 1:1,500  
Fig 3: General view of the gardens, looking north-east  
Fig 4: Detail from the First Edition 1880 Ordnance Survey  
Fig 5: Plan of Trench 3 (1:100)  
Fig 6: Wall [303] with path [309] seen in the section, looking south-east  
Fig 7: General view of Trench 4, looking north-west

Back cover: General view of Trench 4, looking north-west

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT  
ROCKINGHAM CASTLE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
MARCH 2012

**Abstract**

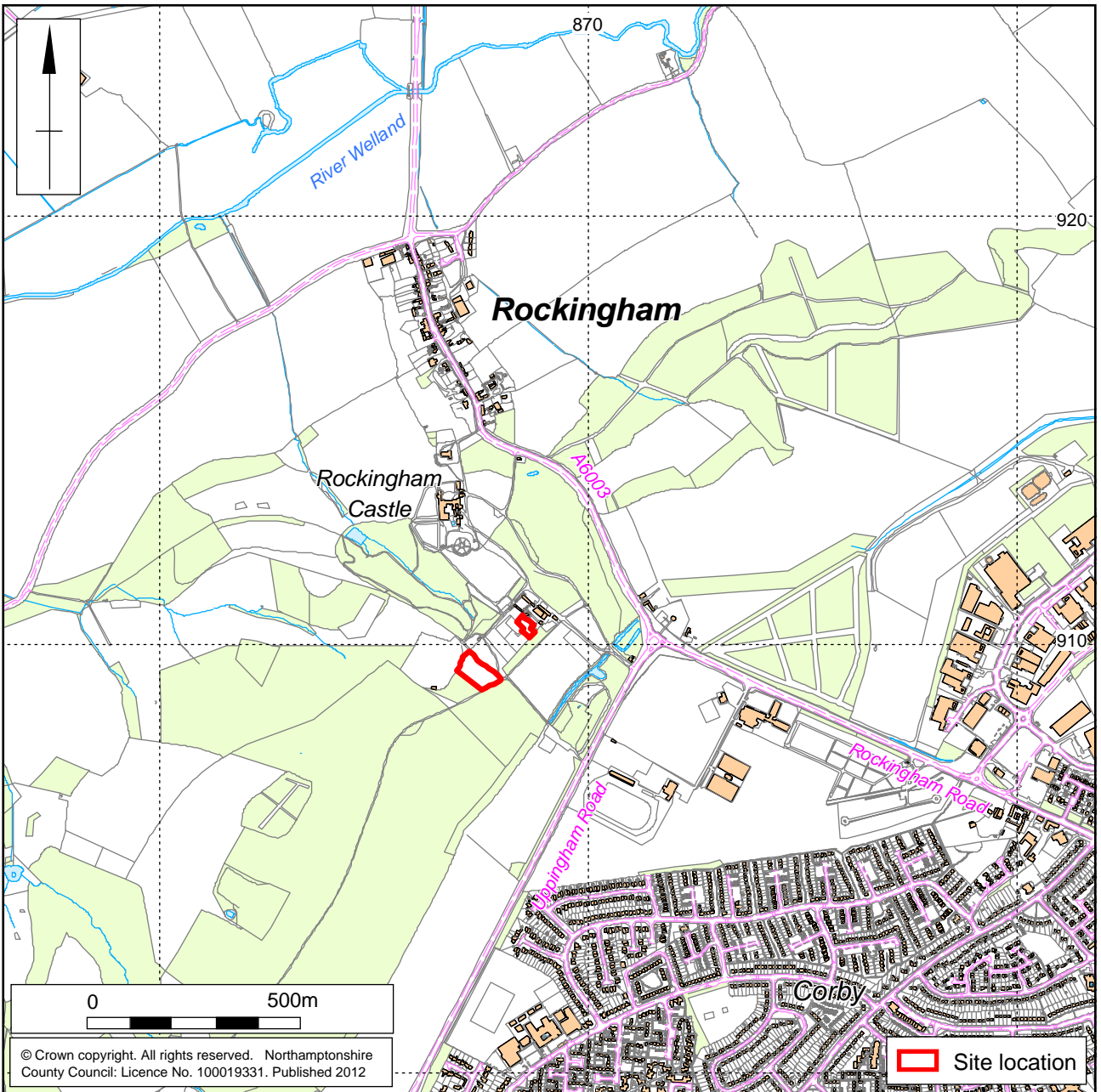
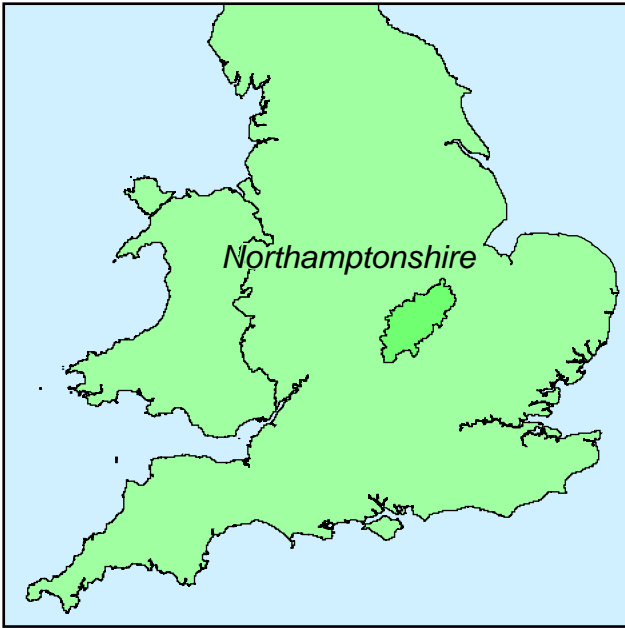
*An archaeological evaluation of part of the gardens at Rockingham Castle, Northamptonshire, was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in March 2012. The works followed an evaluation, desk-based assessment and buildings recording of the walled garden in 2011. The evaluation revealed made ground in the northern part of the site, where an artificial terrace for the 19th-century garden had been created. A small portion of a path and a short length of brick wall associated with the walled garden were recorded.*

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology were commissioned to undertake an archaeological field evaluation on two plots of land (SP 86851 91046 & SP 86741 90937) in the gardens at Rockingham Castle, Rockingham, near Corby, Northamptonshire (Fig 1). The works were commissioned to investigate an area of proposed development in the walled garden to include a tennis court, swimming pool and pavilion, as well as relocating the ménage to the south-west. Previous archaeological works include a buildings survey and trial trenching (Trenches 1 and 2) within the middle segment of the walled garden (Prentice 2011).

The walled garden is not in itself listed, nor does it fall under the curtilage of Listed Buildings that make up the castle or fall within the area which comprises the Scheduled Monument. However, given its proximity to the latter, English Heritage (EH) and Corby Borough Council (CBC) indicated that an archaeological evaluation was desirable. It does, however, lie within the bounds of the Registered Park and Garden (EH 2000).

There was not a Brief for the works but a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological investigation and the subsequent programme of post-excavation works was prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Upson-Smith 2012). The WSI addressed the specific requirements laid out in the English Heritage guidance document, *The Setting of heritage Assets* (EH 2001). The works were carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008) and *Code of Conduct* (IfA 2010) and English Heritage's procedural documents MAP2 (EH 1991) and MoRPHE (EH 2006a). The trial excavation was carried out on 5th and 6th March 2011.



Scale 1:15,000

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1:1,500 (A4)

Trench locations Fig 2

## 2 BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Topography and geology

Rockingham Castle dominates the southern escarpment of the River Welland valley in the northern part of Northamptonshire. The proposed development is located within the northern part of two walled enclosures to the south of the southern bailey of the castle and south-west of the current estate offices. A lime tree avenue flanks the south-eastern edge (Figs 2 & 3). The northern larger enclosure is currently set to grass, with derelict garden buildings, and in its central portion is a manege cut into the slope. It is planned to create a swimming pool in the northern part of the enclosures and therefore Trench 3 was positioned to investigate this area. The manege will be moved to open ground to the south-west of the walled enclosures, and so Trench 3 was positioned to identify any archaeological remains in the area.



General view of the gardens, looking north-east Fig 3

The geology of the area is of glacial tills overlying Lias group stones and Inferior Oolite group stones (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/>).



## 2.2 Historical and archaeological background

The castle and the surrounding area are designated as a Scheduled Monument (SM number 13638). The gardens lie within an area defined in English Heritage's register of parks and gardens (EH 2000) and is listed Grade II\*. The Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (NHER) lists known archaeological sites or find-spots within the county and records, and whilst there are many entries for the castle itself, there are none within the area of the walled garden. The following historical background is abridged from the report on the earlier evaluation works (Prentice 2011).

### *The Castle*

Rockingham Castle was built by William I (c1028-1087) and its earliest main phase comprised a motte with two baileys, one each to the north and south. It was used primarily as a hunting lodge and administrative centre for Rockingham Forest by successive kings and queens until the 15th century when it fell into disrepair (EH 2000). The site of an extensive medieval deer park lies to the south of the castle. Edward Watson obtained the lease of the castle and park in 1544, and over the next forty years he built a large but architecturally simple house based on the old banqueting house in the north bailey. That building campaign was completed by his grandson, Lewis, who bought the freehold of the castle in 1619.

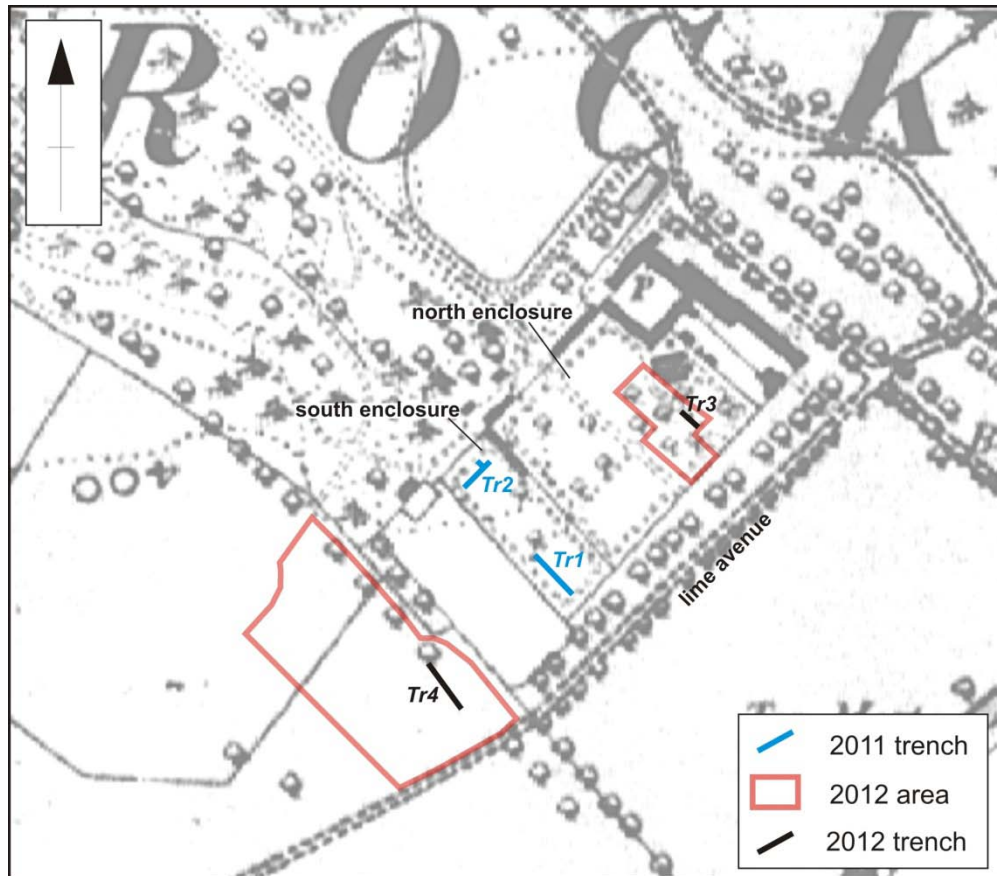
During the Civil War the castle was held by Parliamentary troops under Colonel Horseman and much of the north and west wings were destroyed. At the end of the war the curtain wall was demolished together with the keep, leaving only the drum towers and eastern section of the wall intact. Lewis's son Edward carried out a major restoration and it is possible he also created the terraces and mount out of the rubble of the walls and keep. Little was done until Richard Watson inherited the castle and brought in Anthony Salvin to refurbish in 1836.

### *The 19th-century gardens*

The earliest of the site maps shows the area of the evaluation to be apparently laid to pasture, and it appears to have remained so until the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century. The areas of evaluation lie outside the medieval deer park.

The walled garden comprises two separate, but inter-connected, areas with brick walls partly faced on the outside with stone and lies to the south of this earthwork. The northernmost area of the walled garden is the largest and may have been a kitchen garden. The southernmost, smaller compartment appears to originally have been an orchard.

The First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1880 shows the two walled compartments as they remain today (Fig 4). The larger compartment is divided by cross paths with a peripheral border path and the southern compartment is divided into two, unequal, parts with a peripheral path also. The long range of glasshouses is shown in the north-east corner and the presence of paths leading up to the enclosing walls indicate that both doorways were present.



Detail from the First Edition 1880 Ordnance Survey Fig 4

Northamptonshire Record Office (NRO) holds a number of photographs, one of which was listed as "Gardeners in the veg garden" (NRO P.8729/141; Prentice 2011, plate 1). The photograph is dated c1910 and shows a group of gardeners posing on, and to either side of, the central wide path of the larger compartment, looking south-eastwards with the lime avenue in the background. Trench 3 would be on the left hand side of the frame, in the north-eastern corner of the garden.

In 2011, Northamptonshire Archaeology undertook trial trenching (Trenches 1 and 2) in the southern compartment of the walled garden, which revealed the presence of former paths and planting trenches of 19th century date. A desk-based assessment and building survey of the garden walls and structures was also undertaken (Prentice 2011). Nothing was found during the evaluation within the southern compartment of the walled garden which relates to the development of Rockingham Castle

### 3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The principal aims of the archaeological evaluation as set out in the WSI were:

- To provide detailed information regarding the sequence and character of archaeological remains at the site, at the depth of the proposed construction disturbance;
- To interpret the archaeology of the site within its local, regional and national archaeological context;
- To inform a mitigation strategy.

The work was in accordance with the investigative frameworks defined in *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda* (Cooper 2006), following these general themes:

- Understanding the detailed pattern and evolution of rural settlements;
- Understanding the landscape of castles as a high priority;
- The value of geophysical survey, excavation and environmental analysis in shedding light on garden development.

The evaluation comprised trial trenching. A total of 40m of trenching, 1.8m wide, was excavated. The trench locations were focused on areas of proposed development intrusion as far as on-site constraints permitted, and were carried out in two separate areas. Trench 3, 10m in length, was in the area of the proposed swimming pool and Trench 4, 30m in length, in the area of the proposed new manege (Fig 2).

The trenches were machine-excavated using a flat toothless bucket under continuous archaeological supervision, with the topsoil and subsoil stacked separately and adjacent to the trenches. Mechanical excavation proceeded to the top of the archaeological deposits, or to the natural substrate where no archaeology was encountered.

Archaeological excavation and recording followed the guidelines outlined in the NA *Archaeological Fieldwork Manual* (2011). Each feature or deposit was given a unique number consisting of the trench number and an individual context number (eg 302, Trench 3, context 2). The details of each context were recorded on pro-forma sheets, and this data is summarised in Appendix 1. The trenches were planned and sections drawn where necessary at an appropriate scale. Levels, which were related to Ordnance Datum, were taken on the trenches at appropriate points, on section datum and on all major features. Trench locations were related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. A photographic record was made of the excavation, using 35mm black and white negative film, supplemented by digital images.

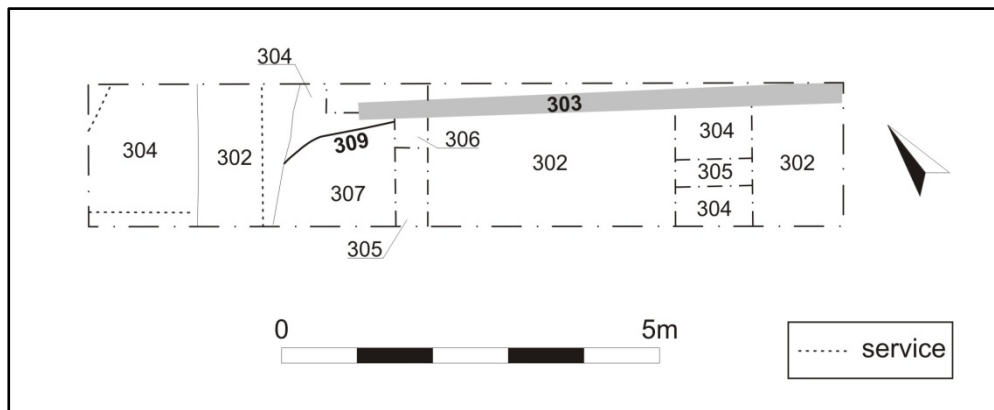
All works were carried out accordance with the WSI prepared by NA (NA 2012), and the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (1985, revised 2010) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (1994, revised 2008). All procedures complied with Northamptonshire County Council Health and Safety provisions and Northamptonshire Archaeology Health and Safety at Work Guidelines.

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

4.1 Trench 3

Trench 3 was aligned south-east to north-west and was located in the north-east corner of the site (Figs 2 & 5; Appendix 1). The archaeological features in Trench 3 related to the construction and layout of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century garden.

The make-up layers (304, 305, 306) for the garden comprised yellowish-brown or orangey-brown sandy clays with fragments of clinker, at least 0.41m thick. These layers probably formed a terrace to the walled garden as part of its construction in the 1840s. Layer (304) produced flower pot as well as bottle and window glass. Sherds of 19th/early 20th-century domestic china comprising white glazed earthenware and under glazed blue transfer printed earthen ware were also noted (but not retained).



Plan of Trench 3 (1:100) Fig 5

At the north-western end of the trench a path, 1.40m wide [309], cutting into the upper makeup layer (304), was exposed (Figs 5 & 6). This was filled with a red gravel and clinker bedding layer (308) overlain by a coarse gravelled surface (307). This corresponds with the location of a path indicated on the 1886 Ordnance Survey map of the garden, leading to a large garden structure in the northern part of the garden. Adjacent to the path [309] was a single coursed mortared brick wall (303), aligned north north-west to south south-east. The wall may have stood slightly higher to form a path edging as there was mortar still adhering the exposed upper surface.



Wall [303] with path [309] seen in the section, looking south-east Fig 6

All of the features were overlain by a layer (302) of dark brownish-black clayey loam with high clinker content up to 0.40m thick. The trench was located along the southern edge of the current access to the field next to the lime avenue so this layer may indicate levelling for a surface. This was covered with a thin layer of topsoil and turf (301) up to 0.10m thick.

#### 4.2 Trench 4

Trench 4, aligned north-west to south-east, was located on the slope overlooking the walled garden enclosures (Figs 2 & 3; Appendix 1).



General view of Trench 4, looking north-west Fig 7

Natural soils comprising dark brownish-yellow clays with flint and gravels (403) were disturbed at the north-western end by vegetation roots and by modern services (Fig 7). The natural soils were overlain with a subsoil (402) comprising a dark brownish-yellow clay, up to 0.10m thick. A dark brown loamey clay topsoil (401), up to 0.20m thick, covered the subsoil. No archaeological features were identified in the trench.

## 5 DISCUSSION

Nothing was found during the evaluation within the northern compartment of the walled garden or in the area outside the garden which relates to the early history and development of Rockingham Castle.

However, Trench 3 identified a path relating to the northern walled garden enclosure and shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey. A garden wall also of late 19th-century or 20th century date was also found.

Few finds were present, all dating to the late 19th-century and early 20th-centuries. They unsurprisingly mostly relate directly to gardening, representing primarily flower pots with a few pieces of domestic china which may have derived from crocking.

The current proposals include the construction of a swimming pool, tennis court and pavilion within the northern compartment of the walled garden complex and relocating the ménage to the south-west. None of the features recorded in the 2011 and 2012 phases of works are historically significant and therefore will not affect the development.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cooper, N J, 2006 *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda*, English Heritage and University of Leicester monog, **13**

EH 1991 *Management of archaeological projects, second edition (MAP2)*, English Heritage

EH 2000 *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England*, Northamptonshire, English Heritage

EH 2001 *The Setting of Heritage Assets*, English Heritage

EH 2006 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment, the MoRPHE Project Manager's Guide*, English Heritage

IfA 2008 *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation*, Institute for Archaeologists

IfA 2010 *Code of Conduct*, Institute for Archaeologists

NA 2011 *Archaeological Fieldwork Manual*, Northamptonshire Archaeology

Prentice 2011 *Archaeological desk-based and building assessment with trial excavation in the walled garden at Rockingham Castle, Northamptonshire February 2011* Northamptonshire Archaeology report, **11/34**

Upton-Smith, T 2012 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation at the Walled Garden, Rockingham Castle, Northamptonshire*, Northamptonshire Archaeology

**APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY**

<b>Trench No</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>	<b>NGR</b>	<b>Surface height</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>10m x 1.8m NW-SE</b>	<b>486866 291046</b>	<b>125.90m</b>	<b>No natural</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/Samples</b>
301	Topsoil	Friable dark brown clayey loam, rare small gravel	0.10m thick	—
302	Layer	Friable dark brownish-black clayey loam with high clinker content, rare very small gravel	0.04m thick	—
303	Wall	Single course of header bond brick walling with white mortar bonding. Aligned north north-west to south- south east	6.5m long Bricks are 0.21m long, 0.15m wide 0.11m thick	—
304	Make-up Layer	Friable orangey-brown sandy clay, occasional rare clinker fragments	0.25m thick	19th/20th century ceramic Not retained
305	Make-up Layer	Friable yellowish-brown sandy clay, rare clinker fragments	At least 0.16m thick	—
306	Make-up Layer	Firm brownish-yellow sandy clay	Not fully excavated	—
307	Fill of 309	Loose dark brown sandy clay, with many coarse, small, angular gravel, well sorted	At least 2m long, 1.40m wide 0.04m thick	—
308	Fill of 309	Loose dark red coarse, angular gravel with fragments of clinker	At least 1m long, 0.77m wide, 0.09m thick	—
309	Cut for path Filled with 307 and 308	Linear aligned north-west to south-east, probably heavily truncated to north-west by services. Profile comprises gradual beaks of slope and flattish base	At least 2m long, 1.40m wide, 0.12m deep	—

ROCKINGHAM CASTLE

---

<b>Trench No</b>	<b>Length, width &amp; alignment</b>	<b>NGR</b>	<b>Surface height</b>	<b>Depth &amp; height of natural</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>30m x 1.8m NW-SE</b>	<b>486765 290933</b>	<b>125.60m</b>	<b>0.26m &amp; 125.34m</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Artefacts/Samples</b>
401	Topsoil	Firm dark brown loamey clay, with rare small flint evenly distributed throughout layer	0.20m thick	—
402	Subsoil	Firm dark brownish-yellow clay, well weathered	25m long, 0.10m thick	—
403	Natural	Firm dark brownish-yellow clay, rare small flint nodules, rare small, sub-rounded well sorted gravels. Tree root/vegetation disturbance at NW end of trench	—	—





Northamptonshire County Council

# Northamptonshire Archaeology



## Northamptonshire Archaeology

2 Bolton House  
Wootton Hall Park  
Northampton NN4 8BE

t. 01604 700493 f. 01604 702822

e. [sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk)

w. [www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk)



CONTRACTORS' HEALTH & SAFETY ASSESSMENT SCHEME  
Accredited Contractor  
[www.chas.gov.uk](http://www.chas.gov.uk)



Northamptonshire  
County Council