

# **CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN**

## **OAKHAM CASTLE**

### **Rutland County Council**

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## **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1.1 What?**

Oakham Castle is situated at the heart of the historic county town of Rutland, and has been a focal point of the town and county for well over 800 years. It was the administrative, judicial and main manorial centre until relatively recent times. In Royal or private ownership until the mid-20th century, it was gifted in 1944 to Rutland County Council. From this period, the responsible Local Authorities have made efforts within the constraints of limited budgets to promote the building, and to a lesser extent the site, and to broaden its use. The Castle is a popular venue for weddings and other ceremonies, and generates a significant income – although this does not cover the costs of operating the site. The Castle is in the heart of Oakham, just off the Market Place, and as such is ideally located for generating increased tourism in to the town, and contributing to the vitality and economic potential of Rutland.

In 2008, Heritage Lottery Fund granted Rutland County Council £50,000 towards a £68,000 project to undertake Project Planning Work to better understand the site; bring forward a plan to restore Oakham Castle to the centre of life in Rutland; and to act as a focus for local tourism and heritage understanding. Prior to this, limited work had been directed to helping visitors, residents and partners understand the history, significance and potential of the site. Work on the HLF funded project has now been completed, with this document summarizing the investigations and proposals for development.

### **1.2 Why?**

There is an urgent pressure on the site as the surrounding Curtain Wall is assessed by English Heritage as being a site at risk with “immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric”, requiring urgent work to remedy the deterioration. Similar problems are notable, although to a lesser extent, in the Great Hall itself, which is extremely constrained in the service it can give to visitors by very poor refreshment facilities, and sub-standard foul waste arrangements.

The purpose of the works outlined in this Conservation Management Plan is to:

- Restore Oakham Castle to being a cultural centre for Rutland
- Generate increased income from the site to ensure its long term viability
- Stabilise and conserve the Castle Walls, restoring the visual impact of the site
- Improve physical and intellectual access to the site, including improving facilities
- Promote the history and heritage of Oakham Castle and Rutland
- Promote Oakham as a tourist destination
- Enable more and better community events to take place in the grounds by creating a more sustainable environment
- Develop the site as a resource for both formal and informal learning by a wide range of users

### **1.3 How?**

There is significant potential for expanding and developing the Castle’s public profile and further extending use whilst respecting its status. There are also significant barriers to realizing the potential, with the strongest being the financial investment required to stabilise and conserve the curtain wall, and improve the refreshment / sanitary facilities of the Castle. One option to overcome this barrier is the National Lottery

supported Heritage Lottery Fund, which has a programme of funding called “Heritage Grants” which are available for the kind of works necessary. Bidding for funding is a competitive process, and will require the securing of at least 10% match funding.

The major areas for investment are:

- Repair and consolidation of the curtain walls
- Repair and conservation of the Great Hall
- Resolution of existing site drainage issues
- Construction of site toilet facilities
- Installation of site interpretation and visitor access facilities

An initial estimate indicates that costs for capital works are likely to be in the region of £500,000 to £900,000. This is based on HLF funded investigations to date. Adoption of this plan would result in a bid for funding to deliver these works. Further details are given in Section 6 of this Plan.

#### **1.4 Who?**

The Oakham Castle site is of central importance to both the town of Oakham and the Rutland community, and therefore it is not possible to solely rely on one source of funding to resolve the known issues, particularly as there is strong competition for funds, and it is possible the HLF route will not be successful. This Conservation Management Plan identifies areas of work that need to be undertaken to ensure the site does not suffer irreversible decline. If the potential of Heritage Lottery Funding is not realised, Rutland County Council and partners will need to consider alternative options for funding essential works. Rutland benefits from a strong and active heritage community, including the Friends of Rutland County Museum and Oakham Castle, who are fully supportive of the need to safeguard and improve the site, and who are committed to raising funds and generating volunteer time to support the works outlined in this report.

#### **1.5 When?**

Some conservation and general site maintenance works are already in place, funded through Rutland County Council budgets. Implementation of the most straightforward recommendations of the HLF-funded Audience Development Plan is already under way. In order to secure funding for the major works in this plan, a Heritage Grant Pre-Application will be submitted outlining the project, which will provide an opportunity for discussion and feedback before a full application is made.

The key steps from this point are:

1. Agree key stretches of the Curtain Wall for stabilisation & conservation
2. Complete Conservation and Development Plan as part of HLF Stage 1
3. Finalise a prioritised Programme of Works
4. Produce a Cost Plan for the Programme of Works
5. Complete HLF Stage 2 and Submit Final Bid

If the bid is successful, the Conservation Management Plan will be undertaken in full; if it is unsuccessful alternative funding strategies will need to be identified, as the essential works must still be delivered as soon as possible.

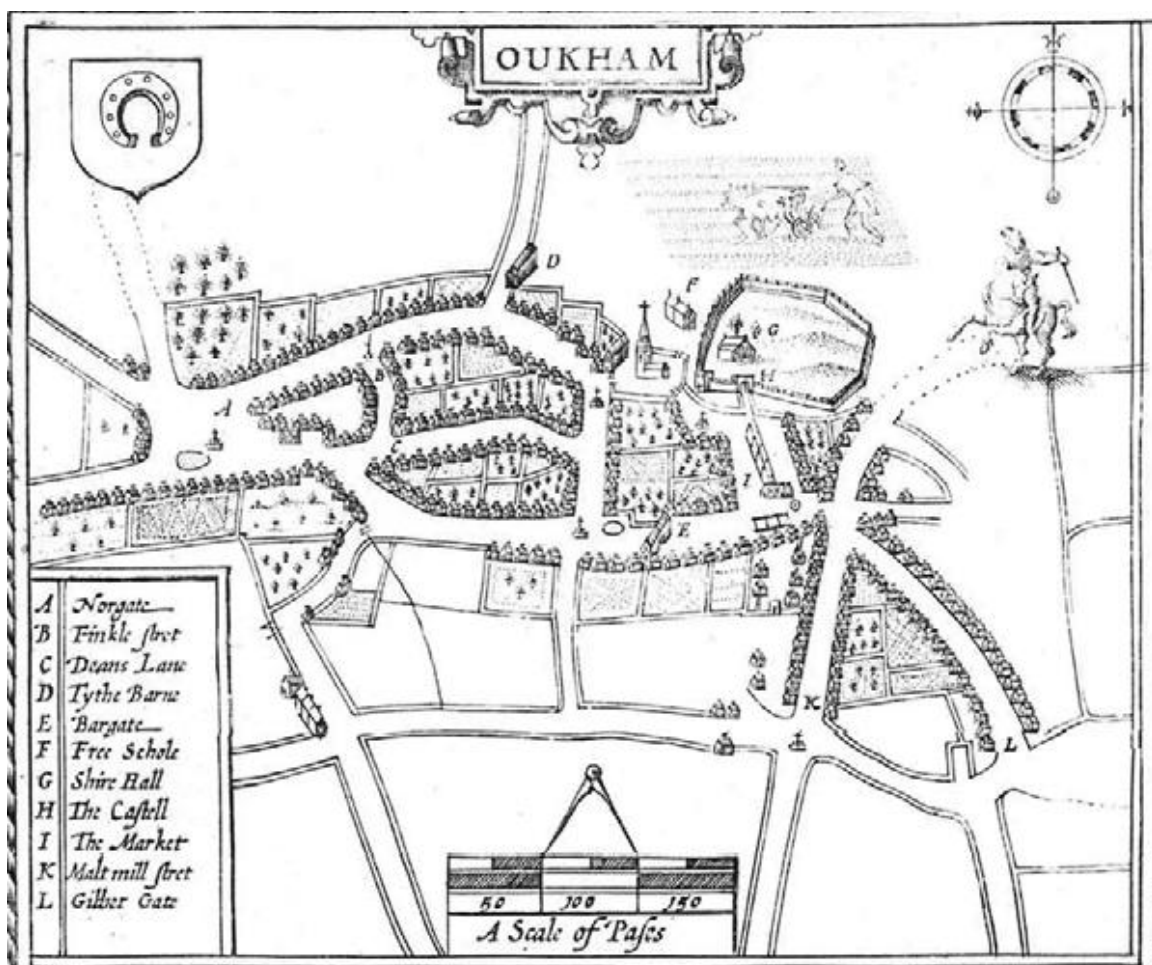
## 2.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SITE AND HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

### 2.1 Site Significance

Oakham Castle is a site of local, regional, national and international importance. The Great Hall, an intact medieval Aisled Hall, is remarkable in Northern Europe as being one of the finest known examples of Norman domestic architecture, with its survival to modern times being related to its other area of importance – it is the oldest English court building that has remained in continuous use, with trials having occurred as early as 1229. Assize Courts were held until 1970 and Magistrates Courts until 2001. Today, occasional Crown Courts and Coroner's Inquests still take place on a biennial basis. This use has ensured the Great Hall's repair when necessary and its remarkable survival to the present day. The building contains fine examples of Romanesque sculpture but is perhaps best known for its collection of horseshoes displayed on the interior walls – the oldest surviving horseshoe is probably the large elaborately wrought horseshoe purported to have been donated by Edward IV in about 1470, although the tradition seems to have Norman origins.

### 2.2 Geographical Location

Oakham Castle is situated within a relatively flat landscape near the centre of Oakham, the market town of Rutland. It lies north of High Street, the main thoroughfare through the town, just off the Market Place. It is now fairly centrally placed within the town, although a map from the 17th century by Speed shows it in the north-east corner of a then much smaller town. The location and proximity to the Market Place make it a natural hub for community events and celebrations.



*Speed's Map of Oakham, 1611 – the Castle is the walled area in the top right area of the map*

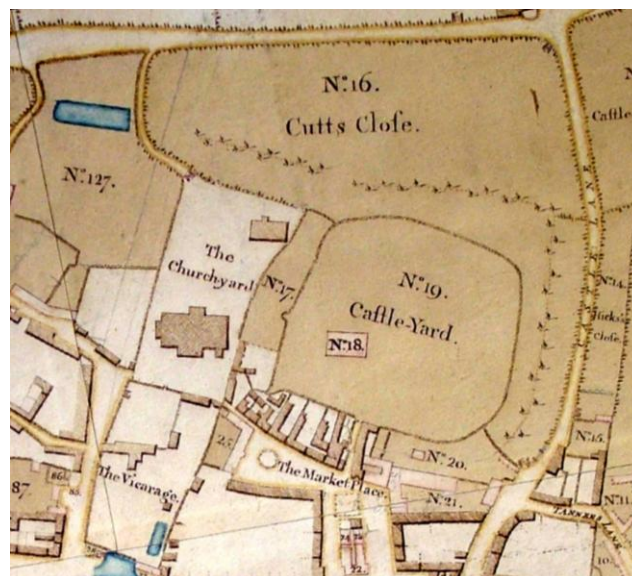
## 2.3 Site Description

The Castle Grounds contain low undulating earthworks and a large intact Norman Hall with 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century extensions on its west and north sides. Much of the site is now managed as a public open space, which owing to its enclosed structure is a natural and popular venue for civic events; small scale music concerts; private weddings and other ceremonies; and of course public enjoyment of green space and historic ambience.



*Aerial view 2007, Google Maps*

To the north of the main enclosure there is what early maps show to be part of a once larger bailey, known as Cutt's Close, defined at its northern extent by a straight bank running alongside Station Road, a shorter west bank and an eastern arm which has been cut through by a short gap. A wide though less substantial east-west bank to the south divides the bailey into a flat north area that may have been used for gardens, from a lower south area that is believed to have been used for fishponds. Cutt's Close is the property of Oakham Town Council rather than the County Council.



*Cullingworth's map of Oakham, 1787.*

## 2.4 Archaeological and Site Knowledge

Structural knowledge about Oakham Castle has been largely based on a few direct historical references; the clear existence of a motte and a circuit of banks to the main enclosure; the architectural stylistic history of the Hall; and some limited direct archaeological investigations.

Before the HLF-funded survey work the existing plan of the Castle was largely based on the work of the Ordnance Survey; a measured survey by Seaman in 1961; and another by Hartley in 1983. Archaeological knowledge of the site was largely drawn from two excavations, one conducted by P. W. Gathercole<sup>1</sup> outside the south gateway entrance in the early 1950s in advance of the building of the Post Office, and the other a series of trenches excavated by local schoolmaster John Barber<sup>2</sup> and school students to the east of the Hall, not long afterwards. The former found a large castle ditch and pottery that included early medieval Stamford ware and St. Neot's ware. In the latter there were found a number of masonry walls of medieval date, believed to belong to service buildings to the hall. The significantly undulating nature of the Castle Grounds is believed to be due to the archaeological remains below ground, and has been deliberately conserved in order that future interpretation of the site for visitors will be readily possible (and of course to preserve any remains themselves).

Since the 1950s little archaeological evidence has been found. There has been some limited trenching in the outer bailey and two minor watching briefs within the castle enclosure. The most revealing work prior to the current phase of investigation (see Section 2.7) has been an extensive geophysical survey carried out by Stratascan and arranged by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) in 2005. This pointed to further structures to the east of the hall (continuing the clear alignment of the hall to the parish church of All Saints), and on a terrace below the motte. Archaeological activity was generally indicated across most of the site. Strong features showing in Cutt's Close probably relate to garden activity.

## 2.5 Historical Knowledge of Oakham

There are some limited printed resources detailing the development of Oakham generally. The Historic Environment Record lists some Roman finds (MLE8109)<sup>3</sup> from the area of the castle precinct and an Iron Age pot shard from north of the castle (MLE6529), although the background to these finds is not given and their positions are incorrectly placed on the HER plan.

The name *Ocheham*, first recorded in the Domesday Book in 1086, is probably a name of Saxon origin with a meaning such as *Occa's* homestead. In 1994 excavations in the south-west part of the town found a possible *grubenhaus* (a type of sunken building found on Saxon sites) with 5th-6th century pottery, together with early medieval pottery and a large ditch, possibly an early town ditch running parallel to South Street<sup>4</sup>.

Nearer to the castle site, during trenching across the south part of Cutt's Close in 1990 a small amount of Middle Saxon pottery was found, with medieval material surprisingly absent. A coin hoard containing silver pennies found in Oakham in 1749 was probably deposited in c.980 and indicates a level of prosperity in the town in the late Saxon period (Clough)<sup>5</sup>. Saxo-Norman pottery of 11th century date has also been found close to the High Street.

In 1955 Radford<sup>6</sup> suggested that the town may once have been a *burh*, an enclosed Late Saxon fortified place, with the north bank of Cutt's Close originally part of its boundary. There is no documentary evidence apart from what might be deduced from Cullingworth's map to support this, and the town is not situated in what could be called a strategic position such as beside a major river, on high ground or close to a major highway. Unlike the irregular banks enclosing the main castle those on the north side of Cutt's Close are straight and more typical of later garden boundaries.

Its origin and rise to importance within the Vale of Catmose may instead be due to its geographical position within a large estate and proximity to a royal forest. A royal connection can be traced back to at least the later 10th century when Rutland was the dowry of Aelfthryth, wife of King Edgar (959-75).

## 2.6 Development and Ownership of the Castle Site

The first castle may have been built in or not long after 1075 when William I acquired the Manor of Oakham on the death of Edith, the widow of Edward the Confessor. The early castle would probably have featured a motte, a common component of early Norman military works from which the occupants could overlook the neighbourhood and symbolically demonstrate their political dominion. The motte probably existed at the time of Domesday Book in 1086 when the king is recorded as having two ploughs belonging to the hall, a likely timber-built precursor to the later stone structure. This earlier hall may well have been built before the Conquest.

The Manor passed to the de Ferrers family but reverted to the Crown in 1204; it was granted to other favourites several times during the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Walkelin de Ferrers is believed to have replaced the timber hall with the present building between 1180 and 1190, a date range largely based on architectural details within the building and which may be corroborated by recent dendrochronological sampling, the results of which are awaited at the time of writing. As Earls of Derby, the de Ferrers also held castles at Duffield in Derbyshire, and Tutbury in Staffordshire, both of which were stronger militarily than Oakham in both their setting and their design (Matarasso 1993, 118)<sup>7</sup>. However, in keeping with most castles, the Oakham site was later strengthened with the replacement of the timber palisade on its banks by the building of a stone wall.

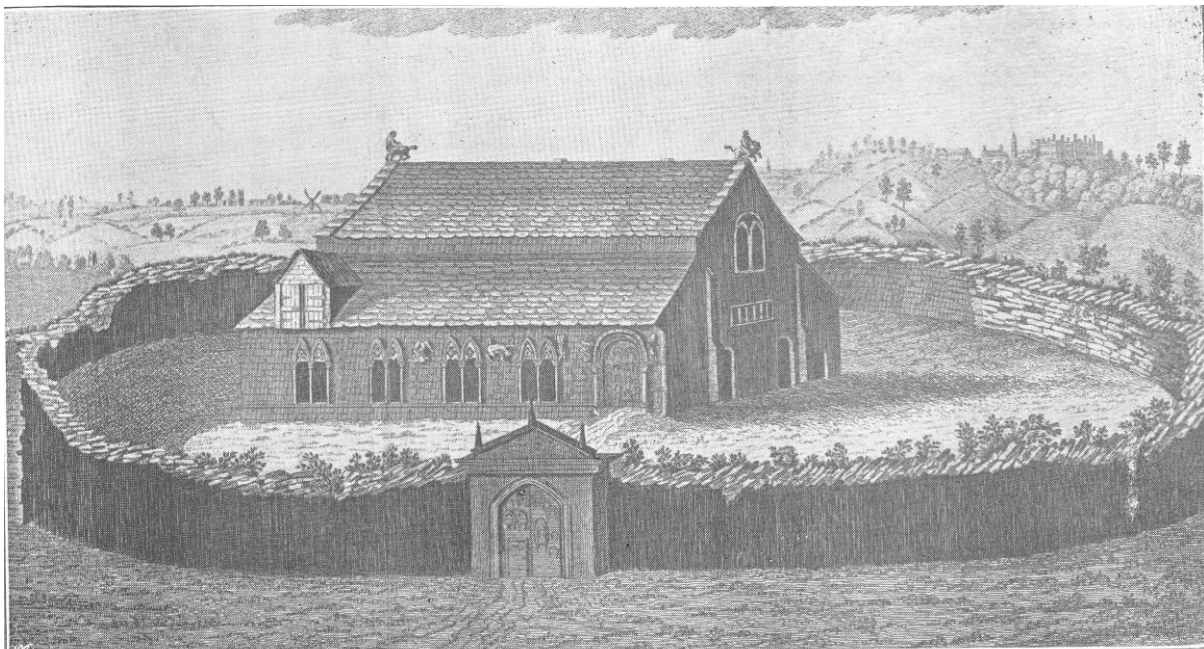
The Castle was mentioned in a number of documents from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards, most notably during the turbulent 14th century. The most detailed description of what was physically present was in an inquisition of 1340 which reads: *'There is at Oakham a castle well walled, and in that castle there are one hall, four chambers, one kitchen, two stables, one grange for hay, one house for prisoners, one chamber for the porter, one drawbridge with iron chains, and the castle contains within its walls by estimation two acres of land: the aforesaid houses are worth nothing annually beyond reprises. And the same house is similarly called the manor of Oakham. There is without the castle one garden, which is worth 8s a year. Stews [fishponds] under the castle, with the fosse, of the annual value of 3s 4d. ... and the presentation of the free chapel placed within the castle amounts to 100s.'* Hartshorne<sup>8</sup> p.139 – Inquis. 14 Edw. III, 2nd Nos., No. 67.

This description paints a picture of a well maintained complex with many buildings present for the castle's dual function of retaining the household of the lord of the manor and for the administration of the surrounding area. Castles in most county towns were the seats of the local lord and functionaries, such as the king's officer or sheriff, and were maintained for purposes of local administration and justice (Goodall<sup>9</sup>, p470); Oakham Castle clearly served this purpose from quite an early period as the Hall is known to have held an assize as early as 1229. With amongst its buildings a gaol for prisoners tried by the court, the defences were as much to keep prisoners in as to keep potential trouble-makers out. Of prime importance though, castles had to be well defended to allow visiting monarchs to feel secure. Oakham Castle was visited on numerous occasions by royalty during the medieval period. In the current debate about castles generally there is a tendency to downplay their overall military function and perhaps see them more as one author has described: 'multi-faceted functional bodies concerned mostly with government' (Davis<sup>10</sup>). Oakham is perhaps a good example of this, where its administrative and judicial roles were clearly of some importance. However, its military role should not be underestimated as documents show that it was one of a group of castles that were kept in a state of readiness through having a *castle-guard*, a feudal obligation on the holder to still man the site in times of peace with a watchman and gate-guard, and perhaps with a local knight as an acting constable. Most castles affected by this obligation were large and important (Cathcart King<sup>11</sup>). Nevertheless, Oakham must be considered a relatively minor castle. Although defended by high banks, a wall and a deep moat, the Oakham

site was not impregnable and internally was probably too small to hold much of a garrison or to host a mobile army.

Various documents from the later 14th century indicate that buildings were deteriorating and needing repair, with works subsequently carried out by several of its holders, especially before a royal visit. Not much is known about the Oakham Castle in the 15th century but castles generally were falling into disrepair as they were proving too costly to maintain by the Crown and were no longer of much relevance. The hall at Oakham must have been continually maintained to serve its important judicial function with the county. By 1521 when its then holder the Duke of Buckingham was executed, an inquisition recorded that at Oakham 'there is an old castle, all ruinous ... the hall is in the best state of repair, and old fashioned.'

Henry VIII held Oakham until 1536 when he granted the manor to Thomas Cromwell. For the first time in 1592 the property was sold, having previously always been in the overlordship of the Crown (Clough). In 1621 when George Villiers acquired the property other improvements were made to the gateway (it was rebuilt and resembles two gateways at his estate at Burley-on-the-Hill) and possibly to the Hall. Villiers may have had the site cleared of the ruinous buildings, although later views suggest that the outer walling was largely left alone and perhaps repaired in places.



*From an*

EXTERIOR OF THE CASTLE

*old Print.*

*Buck's Engraving of Oakham Castle, 1730 – note the door of the Hall is not central, and the Gates have timber doors bearing horseshoes*

During all of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries Oakham Castle was owned by the Finch family, sometimes Earls of Winchelsea and Nottingham, and it is believed during this period it ceased to be used as a place of residence. Maps from this period show the site still referred to as the Castle or Castle-Yard. No gardens or fishponds are shown still existing on Cutt's Close, although Cullingworth's map of 1787 suggests that the embanked garden area may have extended further to the west (with a partly curving western arm) before Church Street was laid out. The moat on the south side of the castle was probably not levelled off until the late 18th century (Gathercole). The First Edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch scale map of the 1880s shows the Hall (by then extended further extended on the north side) fenced off from the surrounding grounds which are known to have been used for grazing cattle by a local farmer. The latter may have used a site just outside the south-east corner of the castle as his yard. A breach was made through the bank here to allow cattle through into the



grounds, and this is now boarded off. Not far to the north of this a small grotto or shelter was built into the outer face of the wall at some point in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Tradesmen may also have utilised the area in front of the Hall, as early 20th century photographs of the castle show sheds and workshops. An area east of the hall was also fenced off for a tennis court, possibly using and extending an existing terrace. In 1944 the then owner Major James Robert Hanbury made a gift of the Castle to Rutland County Council.

## **2.7 Trent and Peak Archaeological Topographical and Photographic Survey**

As part of the HLF-funded work, Trent & Peak Archaeology was commissioned to carry out an archaeological, topographical and photographic survey of the site, culminating in an illustrated report and site archive. The scope of the survey was later extended to include the interior of the Great Hall. The work is available as a separate report, however there are a number of key findings, which are outlined below:

Around most of the castle circuit, with the exception of the south side where the town has encroached across to the present castle boundary, walling appears to be standing upon banking and not in front of it. This is clearly the case on the east side where a length of intact walling can be seen well above the level of the Burley Road car park. Profiles across the eastern defences illustrate the relative high position of the walling atop earthen banks.

Along the east side of the castle where both external and some internal facing can also be found, the survey results appear to show the wall varying between 2.0–2.8m in thickness. Measuring the wall thickness directly is currently near-impossible to achieve due to vegetation cover. The walling on the west side of the Castle behind the former toilet block is at least 2.3m thick. Castle walls were generally built about 10 feet (3m) thick, and thicker still in their foundations. Whilst the Oakham walls may appear at first to be thinner than the general rule, there is evidence to suggest different phases of construction, with much of the intact eastern walling a possible rebuild. A length of wall behind the former toilet-block may be the best surviving length of original walling still standing; it possibly extends further to the south where vegetation cover is especially dense. This walling is near vertical and the coursing slightly irregular. It rises at least 3.5m in height. The size of the stones used and the nature of the construction might suggest that the wall was also not built as high as many castle walls, and this might partly explain the walls being of below average thickness. The nature of the walling might also have been partly determined by both the height and breadth of the pre-existing banking on which it was added. As it may vary around the site further investigation may be worthwhile.

The state of the walling varies considerably around the castle's circuit. Whilst corework survives on the east, south (largely hidden by vegetation and buildings) and the lower west sides, the north and upper west sides have suffered badly. Here, most of the walling had probably already gone before the present-day tree pattern and attendant undergrowth had become established. Nevertheless, following clearance and cutting back of undergrowth prior to the survey, it has proved possible to trace lengths of the outer wall face. The surveying of this walling indicates a general irregularity in its course, probably due to the wall builders having to cope on an existing bank that was semi-circuitous in plan. Whilst towers may have protruded from the defences on the town-facing south side of the castle, a continuous wall-line carried on uninterrupted around the castle's northwest and north-east corners. Beyond the north side there were fishponds (as mentioned in the 1340 inquisition) that acted as a wider moat so towers may have been considered unnecessary on this less-public and more difficult to approach side of the castle.

A noticeable outward bulge of wall core-work shows on the west side of the Castle and this is believed to belong to a former postern gate that may have provided access between the Castle and the Parish Church. This would presumably have led to a footbridge that spanned a moat running alongside the western bank. Alternatively, it may have been designed as a sally-port, a narrow doorway in a tower set at a secure height when seen from the outside, but from which soldiers could emerge to carry out surprise attacks on their opponents. Although early views of the castle fail to show the supposed gate feature, Cullingworth's 1787 plan and the later enclosure plan both show it protruding from the west defences. Later Ordnance Survey maps fail to distinguish it though.

Although now much eroded and in clear need of consolidation to prevent it from collapse, the feature still bears evidence of a central opening, marked by two straight joints about 3 feet (0.9m) apart. In a photograph

taken over a century ago and featured in Finch's 1903 book<sup>12</sup> this opening was then arched over; it may have been one of the so-called *loopholes* mentioned in Wright's county history of 1684. The arch is now gone and the upper part of the feature much reduced by subsequent tree growth. Some intact walling still exists low down, set back in the south-east angle formed between the protruding gate corework and the wall-line running southwards. Although several small trial-holes were excavated in an attempt to follow the base of this, the continuation of it both westwards and southwards must now lie at some depth below a considerable build-up of rubble. John Barber, the schoolmaster who carried out excavations close to the Hall in the 1950s, reported that he had uncovered two sides of the projecting tower. Apparently, subsequent clearing has shown that the tower is rounded (semi-circular) rather than angular in shape (Jones and Ovens).

The overall shape of the gate is now difficult to determine in its current state. As this is a feature that has been singled out as at risk and in need of consolidation (involving the removal of still active tree roots) it may be possible to re-establish its plan by the removal of debris at its base and rebuilding upwards to a low height, to both help support the upper structure and to explain and display it better.

Another tower is shown at the south-west corner of the castle on Speed's plan of the town of 1611. Although this is shown as large, tall and rectangular in shape Speed had a habit of showing all buildings in a similar fashion, even where round towers are known to have existed, such as the North-East Tower and the Gatehouse on his drawing of Nottingham Castle. John Barber wrote that there was a local tradition about a former tower at the south-west corner of the castle. Within the garden area (adjacent to some steps) of the Castle Cottage Café at the back of 35 Market Place, and reached from Church Passage, there is what appears to be medieval stonework rising in height 5m or more. Although only a few metres long and now heavily covered by ivy, the walling appears to turn a right angle at its south-east end and to be overlain by stonework refacing at its west end, where the original walling may have been lost. The apparent shape of the feature when viewed in the garden and the results from the survey tend to support Speed's depiction. Dense vegetation now covers the area between the stonework and the castle rampart. Plans from 1787 onwards tend to show a separate building in this area, set back from the buildings coming off Market Place. It may be that an earlier tower was partly reused in later times, but only further investigation can answer this for sure.

The possibility of there having been an opposing tower at the south-east corner of the castle must also be considered. Although the stonework in this area is missing or badly damaged there is a small section of intact walling that appears to change angle and west of which there is a clear straight joint showing set back and at raised height within the corework. This is at least 2m in height and there is a gap in the stonework west of it 1.2m (4 feet) across. It is similar to the supposed entry point in the west postern gate and may be another of Wright's *loopholes*. Beyond this the corework again changes an abrupt angle, although here it may have been deliberately cut back for a garden.

Other buildings that include chambers, a chapel, prison and barn are recorded at Oakham, although their positions are unknown. Previous ground survey, geophysical survey and the recent scanning exercise have all thrown up possible locations of these other buildings within the site but none are certain. Barber's results have pointed to both the good archaeological potential of the site and that there is likely to be a fair depth of overburden present across it. Whilst this acts as a protective cover to the castle's archaeology, only a future programme of using ground radar and / or below-ground investigation can further our knowledge of the castle's interior for certain.

The hall is a building that is now open to the public to visit and enjoy and is also used for meetings and gatherings. Whilst it has a piped water supply there is no modern foul drainage connecting to the system outside the castle grounds. It is now proposed, as part of the development of the site, to build new toilet facilities alongside the northern extension of the hall and to install a modern drain. A new drain has serious implications for the archaeology of the site as any drain-run may pass the west end of the hall and the area around the gateway. As structural remains are likely to be present across the run, if a route in this direction is chosen, it is recommended that once the proposed route is agreed, that a zone around it (at least 3m across) is first cleared of tarmac / topsoil etc. to see whether any existing runs or already disturbed areas might exist that could be reused. With an initial site clearance of sufficient width a strategy of limiting potential damage to the archaeology may then be feasible and should be devised. Alternatively, a connection in to the mains sewerage system which crosses Cutt's Close may be easier to deliver and could result in less disturbance to the archaeology of the site.

Consolidation of the castle walling and measures to deal with the vegetation (tree roots in particular) are now essential to prevent further damage. This is especially so with the postern gate and the south-east corner. Walling south of the postern gate and up to the possible tower in the cafe grounds is still in reasonable condition and whilst out of public view is probably best left with its current protective cover of ivy. This also applies to walling alongside the east side of the castle down to the grotto.

## **3.0 STRENGTHS, ISSUES AND VULNERABILITIES**

### **3.1 Strengths**

1. The Great Hall of Oakham Castle is a Grade I Listed Building and the site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. These attributes reflect its considerable historical, archaeological and architectural importance
2. The Great Hall of the Castle is generally regarded as one of the finest examples of Romanesque architecture in Britain
3. The horseshoe tradition is widely known as a unique historical tradition, which continues to be enacted to the present day, and attracts extensive publicity
4. The site is on the Register of Buildings at Risk, and has been for a number of years: although this might be regarded as a weakness, it does illustrate the requirement for appropriate proposals for upgrading the maintenance and development of the site are needed and will be welcomed and encouraged by English Heritage
5. There is an extensive repertoire of historical and documentary sources about the Castle, events that took place there, and people associated with it
6. Recent sophisticated archaeological surveys (funded by the HLF grant) have added considerably to knowledge of the site as it is today
7. The location of the Castle and its grounds (including the neighbouring Cutts Close) in the centre of Oakham adjacent to the Market Place means that it is readily accessible by locals and visitors alike both on foot and from nearby car parks
8. The court fittings of the Great Hall are of historical interest in their own right, and the trials heard on the site would make excellent, engaging narratives for interpretation
9. The ambience of the Great Hall lends a dignity and atmosphere to the interior which makes it particularly appropriate for significant events, such as civil marriages and civic occasions
10. The former No 1 Court, now deprived of its mid-20th century formal court furniture, provides a separate space which can be used independently of or in conjunction with the Great Hall
11. The Local Authority derives a significant income from lettings and retail activities
12. The Castle is already used by a number of community groups for formal and informal learning activities
13. There is a strong heritage community in Rutland, with the Friends of Rutland County Museum and Oakham Castle committed to supporting the Castle both with volunteers and fundraising efforts

### **3.2 Issues**

1. The Castle inner bailey attracts a significant amount of public amenity use; however this is not recorded in a structured way

2. There is limited public awareness of what is permitted activity within the castle grounds, which itself is caused partly by lack of interpretation to enable understanding as to the significance of the topography
3. Community involvement and access is limited by:
  - poor detail of information available on the site
  - poor interpretation of standing structures
  - poor visibility due to trees and shrubs
  - assumption of limited value by potential visitors due to low level maintenance
  - personal vulnerability created by single access to the site
  - lack of structured educational programmes / resources for schools and other users
4. The multiplicity of uses for which the hall has been, and continues to be used will mean that some damage may occur if the site is not carefully and actively managed
5. The current standard of reactive maintenance and repair both to the castle bailey and to the Great Hall is generally satisfactory, although significant repairs are required beyond routine maintenance requirements (see Section 6)
6. Inappropriate materials have been used for past maintenance (e.g. re-pointing and internal decoration) and this is having an adverse affect on the fabric
7. Limited active maintenance has taken place on the Curtain Walls for many years
8. Improved access to the grounds needs to be considered, by forming discrete managed timber access ways from the north and / or the east to reduce damage by informal foot traffic
9. Access by wheelchair is impeded from the market square to the hall by the cobbled Castle Lane – improvements to this access should be undertaken by grouting the surface to make a smoother path (although retaining the attractive cobbled feature)
10. There is limited wheelchair access to the undulating Castle grounds
11. Within the hall, the floor level is split within the hall with basic access ramps between the two sections, just sufficient to give wheelchair access throughout the whole of the space
12. The early 20<sup>th</sup> Century addition of an internal entrance vestibule, although necessary for the comfort of users of the Great Hall, impedes significantly the access by wheelchair users. It would not be desirable to remove the fitting, but a modification to improve access should be considered.
13. Signposting to the site from the Market Place, within the Town, at the Railway Station, and on the roads and bypass around Oakham are inadequate or non-existent

### **3.3 Development pressures**

The Rutland Local Plan adopted in July 2001 contains policy safeguards against developments which would harm open space (policy EN4), detract from the character of a Listed Building (policy EN12) or which would have an adverse effect on sites of national archaeological importance (policy EN14). Rutland County Council is formulating its Local Development Framework which sets out the overall approach developments, including the historic and cultural environment, and how new development will be expected to protect and enhance historic assets and their settings. The key approved policy to date is CS22:

“Policy CS22 - The historic and cultural environment

The quality and character of the built and historic environment of Rutland will be conserved and enhanced.

Particular protection will be given to the character and special features of:

- a) listed buildings and features;
- b) conservation areas;
- c) scheduled ancient monuments;
- d) historic parks and gardens;
- e) known and potential archaeological sites.

All developments, projects and activities will be expected to protect and where possible enhance historic assets and their settings, maintain local distinctiveness and the character of identified features.

Development should respect the historic landscape character and contribute to its conservation, enhancement or restoration, or the creation of appropriate new features.

The adaptive re-use of redundant or functionally obsolete listed buildings or important buildings will be supported where this does not harm their essential character.”

Rutland County Council is continuing to consult on specific site allocations, and local bodies are expressing high levels of support for protection of heritage sites.

There are no known pressures on the development of the site, and as a scheduled ancient monument it has significant safeguards against direct development pressures. However there have been historical intrusions at the southern end of the site effectively over the original ditch to the castle enclosure (where the Post Office is currently sited), and in future times further development pressures may occur to the green space to the north of the castle grounds and also to the car park along the east boundary. Such developments must be considered in the context of the heritage site which they adjoin.

### **3.4 Health & Safety Issues**

There are no significant health and safety issues relating to the Great Hall, although emergency exit facilities from the No1 Court / Kitchen area should be reviewed, and the doors on the Great Hall vestibule open the wrong way for emergency use.

Access to the Castle Motte and Walls is dangerous due to the slope, and appropriate methods of managing access should be considered, including provision of notices advising of particular hazards. Some of these elements may be addressed as part of the works to the Curtain Wall, but at present they include:

- loose stones in the standing ramparts to the west
- metal stakes protruding from the ground, formerly forming fence posts, all round the site
- barbed wire, some of it loose and concealed in shrubbery especially to the north of the site
- sheer and unguarded drops, especially to the south-east, north and west ramparts
- unguarded steps and terracing leading to covered feature from Burley Road car park
- overhanging branches crossing unofficial footpaths on rampart tops
- loose masonry
- outward facing pointed metal fencing close to playground in Cutts Close

### **3.5 Presentation and Interpretation**

There is a lack of interpretive information about the site, other than the booklet produced by Rutland County Council on Oakham Castle (Clough) and an information panel in the grounds. A number of steps would improve this situation:

- improve access to the information identified by archaeological investigation, in order to establish a better understanding of the continuity of development on the castle site
- develop a learning resource for schools, colleges, groups and individuals focussing on the history of the settlement and its relationship to the development of the castle
- improve the quality of information on the website through proper interpretation of the archaeological investigation results
- consider the future use of the site as an asset to the town of Oakham, and to the wider county

There is potential in the future to develop one or more of the following:

- open-air venue use formed by carefully positioned moorings for marquees, undertaken with a watching brief to ensure minimal impact on the archaeology
- interpretive historical site: the wealth of historical context in the site makes it suitable for regular living history events, such as Norman Encampments, Medieval Fayres, Victorian Festivals, and Court Re-enactments
- temporarily replicate the known arrangement of properties within the inner bailey by non-invasive surface features
- improved sanitary provision for users of both the Hall and Castle site
- there is a small area of ornamental floral planting to the south of the Hall; marginal areas could benefit from limited sowing of wildflowers add to the diversity of the site

It is essential to have a printed guide for the site. The Clough publication “Oakham Castle” is suitable for informed audiences, and it is worth considering the preparation of a new edition updated with the archaeological results of recent investigations, particularly if funding is secured and delivers significant improvements to the site. It is also worth considering the creation of another guide focussed on school-age / casual interest readers in order to raise awareness and interest in the site.

Visitor numbers to the Great Hall do not justify more than a single member of staff presence. Recruitment, training and deployment of volunteers, to act as site guides would be advantageous to the site. This could also incorporate a research element, to ensure that stories of the history of the Castle are firmly based in documentary evidence, and can also be published as web-guides and podcasts, greatly improving access to the Castle and acting as an additional marketing tool.

Rutland County Council is undertaking a number of steps to improve the tourism potential for the County, including developing work on a Tourist Coach service, which will take visitors on a journey of exploration to the many attractions of the County. Coaches will incorporate visits to Oakham on the circuit, as well as Rutland Water and Uppingham, and there is strong potential to link the timetable to the Castle Guided Tours which are being developed.

## **4.0 CONSERVATION POLICY**

### **4.1 Statutory Framework**

The curtain walls, earthworks, gateway and below ground deposits are all included within the Scheduled Monument and are protected under the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act. Any works (including all ground disturbance and additions or repairs) to the Scheduled Monument require Scheduled Monument Consent (a process operated by English Heritage on behalf of the Secretary of State DCMS). The upstanding fabric of the hall is designated as a Grade I listed building (the highest grade) and is specifically excluded from the scheduling, therefore any works to it are controlled under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. English Heritage must be notified by the Local Planning Authority on all works requiring Listed Building Consent on grade I and II\* buildings. Where the owner and applicant is the Planning Authority (as in this case) all Listed Building Consent Applications are determined by the Secretary of State DCLG.

### **4.2 Basis of Approach**

There is an urgent need to consolidate and repair the curtain wall of the castle both above and below ground level, and to prevent further decay, which has been caused over many years by tree root damage and unauthorised foot traffic creating ruts and forming desire lines across the walls. The Great Hall is in relatively good structural order, however there are long term repairs and maintenance issues required to be resolved in order to enable future extensions of use, and in particular to address issues with the foul drainage and refreshment facilities on site.

### **4.3 Repair Strategy**

The Condition Survey completed by Weston Allison Wright has analysed the composition of the Curtain Wall and the fabric of the Great Hall in order to ensure that all interventions are appropriate and sympathetic to the context of the site. It has established the materials which have been used in the past, and will be used actively to ensure that future repairs to the building and the Castle walls will maximise the retention of all built elements within the site.

Following development of understanding of the site and its buildings, the following chronology should be adopted to mitigate potential archaeological loss and improve the understanding and enjoyment of the site.

The essential elements of the Repair Strategy are:

- Careful removal of vegetation from the Curtain Wall using the Specification prepared by FPCR, including removal of the most damaging / dangerous trees (although many trees will be retained)
- Ongoing control of vegetation to the Curtain Wall to minimise further deterioration using the Ecological and Arboricultural Management Plan prepared by FPCR
- Implementation of a new Foul Drainage solution which will connect the Great Hall with mains drainage in Cutts Close, thereby ensuring future viability of the site
- Undertake consolidation and repair works to the Curtain Wall (complete external circuit) using the Specification prepared by Weston Allison Wright, focussing on ensuring the long term stability of the site, and improving the visible interpretation for Visitors
- Installation of improved customer refreshment facilities and lavatories adjacent to the No 1 Court building, and with an entrance from the No 1 Court as well as externally



- Installation of low intervention timber walkways to enable controlled pedestrian access between (in order of priority)
  - Base of the Castle Motte to the summit, including a controlled viewing area
  - Castle Grounds and Cutts Close
  - Castle Grounds and Burley Road Car Park
- Repairs to the Entrance Gateway
- Repairs and improvements to the Great Hall, including lime wash to the internal walls, conservation works to the Court Furniture, and general repairs to the fabric of the building

In parallel with the delivery of the repair strategy, Rutland County Council will undertake a phased delivery of the Audience Development Plan formulated by Tricolor, which will deliver improved engagement with site visitors, and a clearer focus on the needs and expectations of the community. It will also enable wider usage of the Castle Grounds and Hall for amenity purposes, and improved interpretation of the existing building and understanding of the network of structures which formerly occupied the site.

Access to the site will be improved through the installation of simple timber access routes, and there will also be improvements to the cobbled entry through Castle Lane by grouting the now significant gaps between the stones, in order that disabled persons will have easier admittance to the site.

It is hoped that, given the present changes to the Court Sitting arrangements underway in England, the traditional of biennial Courts will be maintained. In 2011, the Court featured a full procession with horse-drawn carriage, significantly adding to the pageantry and spectacle of the occasion.



*The horse-drawn carriage carrying the Hon Mrs Justice Macur and the High Sheriff of Rutland Peter Lawson arrives at Oakham Castle, Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2011*

The collection of Horseshoes and its ongoing tradition, the right of the Lord of the Manor, will be maintained as a key element of the heritage of the site, and as a subject of visitor interest and comment. The Audience Development work will focus on the huge potential for interpretative uses of the collection, and they will form a key part of the Tour Guide experience. Awareness raising and interpretation of the collection will be

undertaken, in order to foster community ownership and understanding of the manorial connections, and the ceremonial history of the site.

#### **4.4 Maintenance Management**

The scheme of repairs and works outlined above are necessary to ensure the stabilisation of the site, after which it will be possible to institute a maintenance regime on the walls and grounds which will be affordable, visually attractive, and ensure site preservation in to the long term. In order to avoid damage of archaeological remains just below the surface, and to enable visitor interpretation, there will be no alterations to the current undulating nature of the site, and grass cutting / vegetation control will continue to be undertaken with all the due care and attention necessary.

Rutland County Council will maintain a centralised control (one point of responsibility) of maintenance works and any alterations or other works to the site or buildings. The conservation and interpretation needs of the Castle and Hall will be of the highest priority when setting goals, while ensuring that the site moves in to a positive financial position.

Special care needs to be taken with any works that impact on the grounds, with the aim of minimum disturbance to the areas of ground which are subject to significant archaeological interest, the maximisation of finds from any areas within the Hall. The archaeological investigation of the site should be controlled, in order to minimise robbing of the archaeological interesting areas, particularly by the use of metal detectors (this would be a criminal offence under section 42 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979).

#### **4.5 Recording and Publishing Findings**

The works outlined above will generate further information and findings which will be recorded and published as part of the outputs of the project. Rutland County Council is presently working to bring together all the written records relating to the Castle buildings, including the modern repairs, in to a properly catalogued and accessible collection for academic research, but also with the purpose of updating the Clough guide; designing a new popular Visitor Guide; and scripts for volunteer Tour Guides. Increasing knowledge of, and intellectual access to, the Castle is a major interest of the Friends of Rutland County Museum and Oakham Castle; the Rutland Local History and Record Society; and English Heritage, all of whom have strongly encouraged and supported the work to date, and continue to support the development of the plans for improving the site.

## 5.0 MANAGEMENT POLICY

### 5.1 Strategic Aims

Rutland County Council has adopted 6 Strategic Aims in order to guide its work and direct funding to the most important priorities for the local area. These Aims include:

Creating an active and enriched community

Creating a sustained environment

Building our infrastructure

Investing in the long term future of Oakham Castle is underpinned by these aims, as securing a viable future for the site will improve the infrastructure of the visitor economy; provide a model for the sustainable enjoyment of heritage environments; and crucially engage the local community and visitors in the enjoyment and understanding of the shared heritage that Oakham Castle represents.

### 5.2 Alternative Approaches

In considering the possible strategies for addressing the future of the Castle, thought has been given to a range of options, from “do nothing”; “gradual corporate investment”; “major funding bid”; “engaging commercial partners”; and “disposal of the site”. The outline result of this review is as follows:

<p><b>Do Nothing</b></p>	<p><b>Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* No immediate additional capital or revenue cost for the Authority</li> <li>* Existing levels of use are comparable to some similar sites</li> <li>* No immediate diversion of officer and member time</li> </ul> <p><b>Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The Castle Walls are continuing to deteriorate; delay in action will increase both revenue maintenance costs and eventual capital cost</li> <li>* The Castle is a significant site both within Oakham and on a national scale, continuing neglect will have significant reputational effects</li> <li>* Potential for increased income and tourism will not be realised</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gradual Corporate Investment</b></p>	<p><b>Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Small immediate additional capital and revenue cost for the Authority</li> <li>* Little disruption in current activities at the Castle</li> <li>* Improvements may be fitted in to current officer workstreams</li> </ul> <p><b>Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Low levels of investment will not be sufficient to redress the “At Risk” status of the Curtain Walls</li> <li>* Long term revenue maintenance costs and capital costs will not be mitigated and site will eventually be overtaken by deterioration</li> <li>* Currently available Heritage Grant Schemes may not be available in the future, particularly if current partnerships disperse</li> <li>* Potential for increased income and tourism will not be realised</li> </ul>
<p><b>Major Funding Bid</b></p>	<p><b>Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Potential to address deterioration of the Castle with a programme that will secure the site for decades into the future</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Significant potential for enhanced cultural and heritage tourism and activities based around and referring to the site</li> <li>* Current match funding requirements for heritage grants are at historically low levels</li> <li>* Bids may include officer time as match funding, and additional resource for Project Management is an allowable area for funding bids</li> <li>* Significant public support for works to improve the local environment and heritage assets</li> <li>* Long term revenue and capital costs of running the site will be reduced, and may move to a break-even position</li> <li>* Detailed preparatory work has been undertaken and supporting partnerships built</li> </ul> <p><b>Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Local Authority will need to lever match funding and identify officer time to develop and deliver a bid</li> <li>* Heritage Grant Schemes are competitive, and a bid may not be successful</li> <li>* All Local Authority spending is at historically low levels</li> </ul>
<p><b>Engage Commercial Partners</b></p>	<p><b>Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Initial investigations of this area have identified some potential partner organisations</li> <li>* Additional revenue and capital resource may be generated</li> <li>* New and innovative uses for the site may be initiated</li> <li>* Increased use of the site will benefit both the participants and the local community</li> </ul> <p><b>Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Potential partners engagement has met with limited success as Partners are unwilling to commit to a site with significant deficits of refreshment and amenity provision</li> <li>* No significant capital investment streams have been identified</li> <li>* Commercial uses may work to the detriment of promoting the heritage and cultural aspects of the site</li> <li>* None of the potential partners wished to undertake work on addressing the fundamental issues of the site; their focus is on viable business opportunities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disposal of Site</b></p>	<p><b>Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Initial investigations have identified some potential routes for site disposal</li> <li>* Sale of the site would remove some of the corporate risk around maintaining a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade I Listed Building</li> <li>* Some one-off capital resource may be generated</li> <li>* New uses for the site may be developed</li> </ul> <p><b>Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The Authority would lose control of a significant public asset in the centre of the community, which is used for many civic events</li> <li>* There would be likely to be significant reputational damage to the Authority if a sale was made to an unsuitable owner</li> <li>* Potential owners have indicated there would be very limited capital receipts</li> </ul>

	<p>– indeed some would require a “dowry” to assume responsibility for the site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* A new Owner may not wish or be able to address the conservation issues of the site</li> <li>* A new owner may not share RCC / Community Priorities, and may work to the detriment of promoting the heritage and cultural aspects of the site</li> <li>* Work to promote the tourism potential of the site may be problematic</li> <li>* There will be some residual corporate risk as a previous owner of an At Risk site, and with a Strategic Aim of sustaining the local environment</li> </ul>
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It seems clear from this analysis that the preferred way forward at this point will be to pursue a Major Funding Bid to deliver this Conservation Management Plan.

### 5.3 Management Considerations

Delivery of the Conservation Management Plan will take into consideration the following aspects:

- **History:** The pattern of usage and development has varied through the centuries. This has included use continuously for at least a thousand years. During this time the site has had multiple uses, including being a moated dwelling site; a motte and bailey castle; a fortified castle with stone ramparts and towers; a museum with a historic collection of horseshoes; a public garden; a ruin; a public open space; a courtroom; a prison; a hall licensed for weddings; and a public entertainment venue
- **The horseshoe collection:** Although independent of the usage of the site, and remaining under the ownership of the Lord of the Manor, the horseshoe collection remains firmly associated with the Great Hall. Relocation of the horseshoes would fundamentally alter the nature of the building, and would be likely to excite very considerable public opposition. The interpretation of the collection is a priority for development.
- **Improved facilities:** The development of the site and the Great Hall will require a significant improvement in the facilities to enable enhanced access and usage. This will include good quality toilet accommodation, accessible for both the castle site for external events, and internally, for visitors and users of the hall facilities. This should also include modest catering facilities, sufficient to enable the provision of hot drinks, the reheating of food, and compliance with environmental health restrictions relevant to these operations.
- **Improved public access:** The fullest possible access should be incorporated both to the great hall, its ancillary buildings, and to the site. Access should not only include wheelchair access, but access also for the visually impaired and the aurally impaired. Development of intellectual accessibility will incorporate social issues focussing on crime and punishment (reflecting the history of the building as a court and prison) and British Nobility (based around the horseshoe collection)
- **Retention of essential character:** All development on the site must ensure that the essential character of the site and the Great Hall is retained. The Castle Motte requires enhancement, by improved visual exposure, better interpretation, and improved managed access to reduce the erosion caused by informal footpaths.
- **Archaeology:** All further development of the site will ensure that appropriate archaeological recording takes place in order to continue to develop knowledge of the history of the site.

### 5.4 Management Policy Aims

The following aims should be adopted as the overriding principles for the future development of the site:

- A: Mitigation of risk to the built fabric and historic environment through the implementation of appropriate conservation strategies
- B: Fully realising the potential of the Castle and Great Hall as a cultural centre, heritage centrepiece and tourist attraction for Rutland
- C: Improving the site and its immediate context to enhance understanding of the historic landscape and the heritage of the region
- D: Ensuring all legal requirements for the site, including access and safety, are addressed

## 6 Schedule of Works

### 6.1 Budget costs

Costs will require detailed site measurement and quantities – this will be undertaken as part of the HLF Stage 1 process. They will also need to incorporate statutory consent fees and professional fees. Final costs will depend on the content of the specification and the conditions at the time of tender.

### 6.2 Description of works

Item	Description	Priority
<b>External Great Hall</b>		
G-1	Main Hall roofs	B
G-2	No 1 Court roof – general repair	B
G-3	No 1 Court roof – w/c	A
G-4	Roof to the judges’ retiring rooms – roof covering	C
G-5	Roofs to cells	B
G-6	Boiler room roofs – gutter clearance	A
G-7	Repairs to dormer windows – ridge tiles and glazing	A
G-8	Main Hall roof vent openings	B
G-9	Repairs to chimney stacks	B
G-10	Rainwater goods	B
G-11	External wall repairs to Main hall	B
G-12	External wall repairs Judges’ retiring rooms	B
G-13	External wall repairs to cells	B
G-14	External wall repairs to No 1 Court – general areas	B
G-15	External wall repairs to No 1 Court – w/c	A
G-16	Repairs to boiler room walls	C
<b>Internal Great Hall</b>		
I-1	Main hall interior – movement monitoring (fees)	B
I-2	Main hall interior – guttering	A
I-3	Main hall interior – plaster replacement	B
I-4	Main hall interior – floor paving	B
I-5	Judges’ retiring rooms interiors - refurbishment	C
I-6	Cells interiors – refurbishment	C

I-7	No 1 Court interiors – w/c interior only	B
I-8	No 1 Court re-carpet	C
I-9	Refurbish Court Furnishings in keeping with interior but incorporating improved mobility of fittings	C
I-10	Improve kitchen fittings to allow enhanced catering offer	C
<b>Sanitation and Drainage</b>		
S-1	Connect Great Hall sewerage system to mains drainage infrastructure in Cutt's Close through subsurface bore	B
S-2	Build new toilet facilities on concrete slab adjacent to No 1 Court and Boiler House to improve visitor experience	B
S-3	Make new entrance to toilet facility from No 1 Court (facility to also have external door for use when main building is closed)	B
S-4	Cap off and remove toilet in Cell; refurbish interior for interpretative use	C
<b>Curtain Wall</b>		
W-1	Entrance gate repair	B
W-2	South wall repair & consolidation	B
W-3	West wall repair & consolidation, incl. reconstruction of postern gate stonework (but not opening of entrance) and towers increasing visual impact	B
W-4	North wall repair & consolidation increasing visual impact, incl. simple timber access route to Cutt's Close	B
W-5	East wall repair & consolidation increasing visual impact, incl. simple timber access route to Burley Road car park	B
W-6	Motte and South wall (Whipper-Inn) stabilisation, support wall and backfilling	A
W-7	Motte and South wall (Whipper-Inn) temporary safety fencing	U
W-8	Replacement of existing partial runs of fencing at the exterior foot of the walls with sympathetic, secure fencing	B
W-9	Simple timber access route to Motte with viewing area	B
<b>Ecology &amp; Arboriculture</b>		
E-1	Remove trees that are damaging the walls, banks and exposed masonry with care	B
E-2	Retain and manage trees and shrubbery not directly impacting on the structure of walls to maintain aspect of site	A



E-3	Continue to cut back and manage blackthorn scrub; replace with managed scrub (e.g. hawthorn)	B
E-4	Manage the grass and marginal areas as per current regime, and eliminate ragwort from the latter	B
E-5	Install bird boxes, insect houses, and other fauna houses to maintain biodiversity of site	C
E-6	Plant new scrub to screen and protect existing badger sett from disturbance and prevent badger encroachment into archaeology areas	B
E-7	Undertake bat surveys in buildings and trees; install bat boxes on retained trees to provide alternative habitats	B
E-8	Sow marginal (non-grass) areas with wildflower seeds to increase biodiversity and visitor interest over time (not formal gardens)	C
E-9	Produce awareness guideposts for visitors interpreting the ecological and biodiversity aspects of the site, and highlighting safety aspects of access to the mound / walls	C
<b>Audience Development</b>		
A-1	Commission site-external signage for improved road and pedestrian access (including bypass)	A
A-2	Commission signage on Castle Lane to guide visitors to the site (possible iron archway in similar design to Oakham School arch)	B
A-3	Remove all open storage in Great Hall, de-clutter, reduce and improve internal signage / interpretation. Remove advertising notices etc.	A
A-4	Develop programme of talks, events and educational sessions	B
A-5	Develop educational information packs including accessible formats	B
A-6	Enforce no parking on site excepting disabled visitors	A
A-7	Develop distinct identity for the Castle and market as a separate visitor attraction to the Museum, not an "add on"	B
A-8	Review internal fittings to ensure appropriate impression is given of site	B
A-9	Improve use of No 1 Court when not in use, encourage access for display of art works / children's activities etc.	B
A-10	Investigate community social enterprise for provision of café facilities	C
A-11	Engage with specialist promotion / management company following completion of works to market and run enhanced weddings & events	C
<b>Disabled and Intellectual Access</b>		
D-1	Improve wheelchair access via Castle Lane through grouting of cobbled route	B
D-2	Improve wheelchair access to Great Hall through sensitive modification to vestibule	B

D-3	Improve ramping and remove trip hazards in Great Hall	A
D-4	Provide audio guides and improved written materials for self-directed exploration of the Great Hall and Grounds	B
D-5	Recruit, train and deploy volunteer tour guides	B

### Priorities

U – urgent works to be carried out immediately

A – work which should be carried out within a year

B – work which will be required between 2 to 5 years

C – work which can be carried out after 5 years

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