

**Archaeological Attendance and Recording (Watching Brief) at
Bosworth 1485 Sculpture Trail (Site 5: 'Piecing together the Past'),
Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, Ambion Lane, Sutton Cheney, Leicestershire, CV13
0AD**

NGR: SK 40348 00055

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Document and Version Control

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Cover photo: Area of sculpture works, looking west

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Administrative Areas	Country: England County/Local Authority: Leicestershire Local Authority District: Hinckley and Bosworth Parish: Sutton Cheney
Project Methodology	The watching brief involved the observation of the construction works for the scheme by an experienced professional archaeologist. The design for the work was due to involve excavation within the courtyard of a foundation pit for the sculpture base, this pit measuring 1.6m square and with a depth of 0.72m. Excavation was carried out by the client's contractor, and the work involved hand-digging of the foundation trench. Spoil was removed from the excavation area by barrow and stored off-site.
Project Results	The depth of the sculpture base foundation pit, the excavated pit measured 1.75m square and with a depth of 0.45m. After removal of the brick paving (0.08m deep), a sand blinding layer was first exposed with a depth of 0.05m (Figure 5). This overlaid a deposit of Type 1 aggregate, crushed hardcore. This aggregate deposit continued to the base of the foundation pit, i.e. at formation depth at 0.45m. At the base of the foundation pit, protruding through this material were a few fragments of modern building material, including fragments of concrete blocks and paving slabs, and fragments of factory manufactured tile. This lower deposit of modern material was not exposed further, but this indicates either levelling of buildings here or that material was imported to site, presumably to raise ground levels. Metal detecting was not carried out on any of the excavated deposits as they consisted only of modern materials either brought in to site or of uncertain origin. No archaeological deposits were exposed and no artefacts were recovered during the work.
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Summary

This report details the results of an archaeological Attendance and Recording (Watching Brief) carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at Bosworth 1485 Sculpture Trail (Site 5: 'Piecing together the Past'), Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, Ambion Lane, Sutton Cheney, Leicestershire CV13 0AD. The work was undertaken on the 3rd January 2024 on behalf of Bosworth 1485 (Leicestershire Promotions Limited) in advance of the installation of a new sculpture display.

A Heritage Impact Assessment had identified that there was a potential for Roman and/or medieval remains in the proposed area. An area 1.75m x 1.75m was stripped down to formation depth, which was 0.45m below current ground level. Only modern deposits were exposed during the work. No archaeological features or artefacts were identified.

Due to the absence of archaeological remains of any significance the archive X.A 56.2023 has been deemed a sterile project. The Leicestershire Museums accession number has been retained but the archive will be available via OASIS.

The report and digital record of the work will be deposited under the Oasis number universi1- 521861 with the Archaeology Data Service.

Introduction

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Section 16 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, (MHCLG 2021) this document forms the report for Archaeological Attendance and Recording (Watching Brief) at Bosworth 1485 Sculpture Trail (Site 5: 'Piecing together the Past'), Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, Ambion Lane, Sutton Cheney, Leicestershire CV13 0AD.

The work was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on behalf of Bosworth 1485 (Leicestershire Promotions Limited).

Planning Permission has been granted for the installation of a new sculpture display (Planning Ref: 23-00089-FUL), and the permission includes a condition for archaeological work. A Heritage Impact Assessment had identified that there were known remains of Roman and medieval date within the immediate vicinity of the proposals (Hunt and Hyam 2022), and therefore there was a potential for Roman and/or medieval remains on the site. Due to the archaeological potential, the Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire has requested Archaeological Attendance for inspection and recording (Watching Brief) during any groundworks for the proposed development in order to record any archaeological remains that may be present and mitigate the impacts of the scheme.

Location, Topography & Geology

The site is located at Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, Ambion Lane, Sutton Cheney, Leicestershire CV13 0AD, NGR: SK 40348 00055 (Figure 1-Figure 2). It is situated within the registered area of the battlefield (Battle of Bosworth (Field) 1485 site, List Entry 1000004).

The proposed location of the new sculpture is situated on an area of flat ground at c.120m aOD within the courtyard of the visitor centre, and is currently an area of brick paving.

The British Geological Website indicates that the underlying geology of the area is likely to be Gunthorpe Member Mudstone overlain by Glaciofluvial Deposits (sand and gravel) or Wolston Clay (clay, silt & sand) (<https://www.bgs.ac.uk>).

The Soilscape website indicates that the soils within the site are likely to be 'Soilscape 18: Slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils' (<http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscales>).

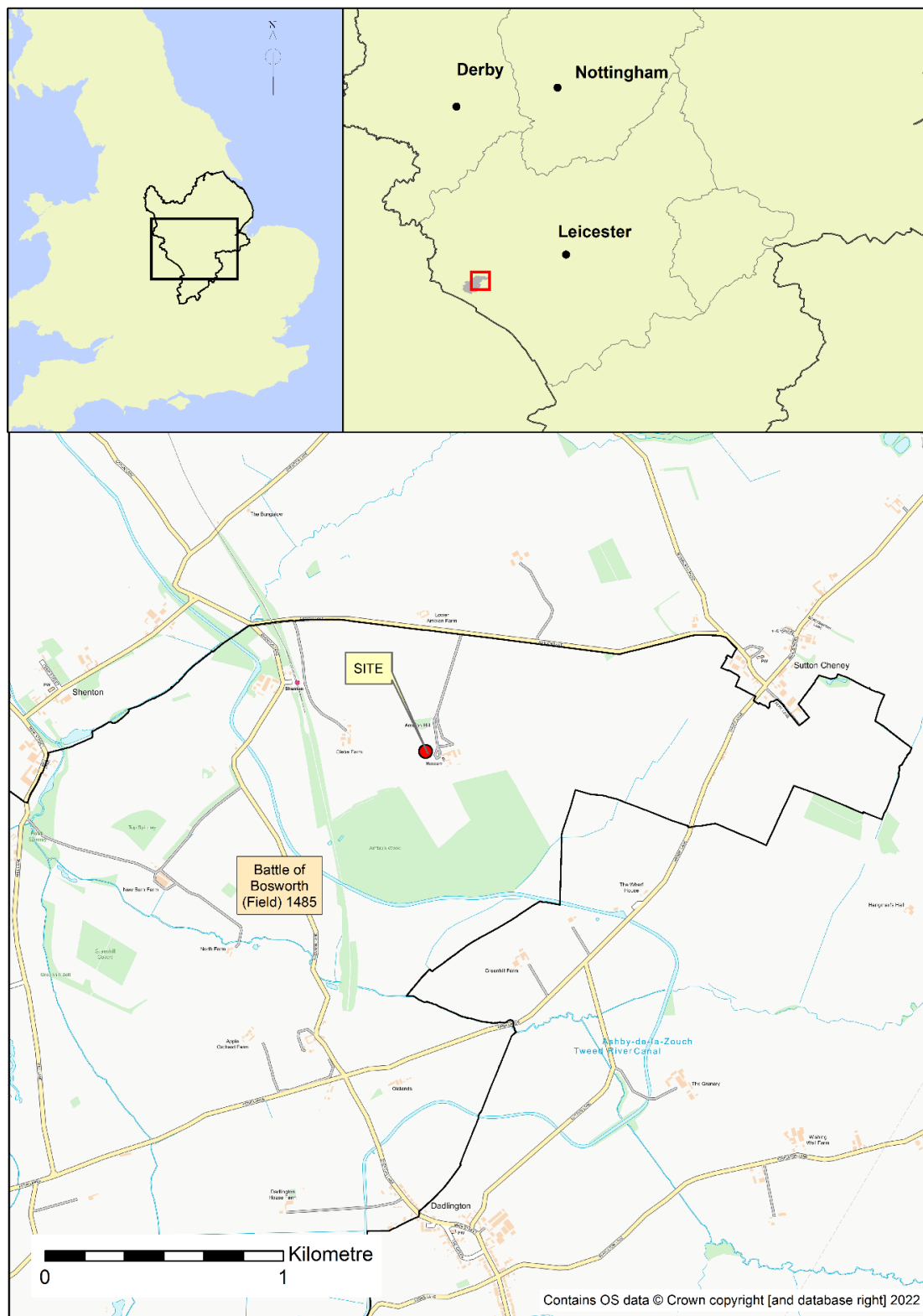


Figure 1: Site 1 location, within UK, county, and local.

This map also shows the location of the Registered Battlefield (black line)

Historical and Archaeological Background

A Heritage Impact Assessment was produced for the proposed sculpture site and four other proposed sites (Hunt and Hyam 2022). The following is summarised from the Site 5 assessment. The assessment included the consultation of the Historic Environment Record (HER) for the area within a 250m radius of the proposed site. The HER monument numbers are shown in bold in the text. The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) was also consulted records several findspots for artefacts within a 250m radius of the site.

The village of Sutton Cheney is of Anglo-Saxon/early medieval origin. The place-name 'Sutton' is a very common English place-name meaning, simply 'the south place or farm'. It is normally associated with a larger village or town; in this case Sutton is the village to the south of Market Bosworth (Mills 2003). The village, and the churchyard site, fall within the Sutton Cheney Conservation Area.

Prehistoric and Roman

Two pieces of Neolithic/Early Bronze Age flint were found during a watching brief at the Heritage Centre in 2004 (**MLE16575**). Further flint artefacts including a Neolithic arrowhead were found 160m north-west of the Heritage Centre (**MLE20204** & **MLE22109**).

Roman

Cropmarks of what appears to be one corner of a rectangular enclosure were noted in the 1980s on fields 160m north-east of the site (**MLE3239**). Fieldwalking in 2000-2 recovered a scatter of Roman finds concentrated south-west of the cropmark, suggesting occupation in this area.

An evaluation in 2003 prior to the erection of a tithe barn relocated from off-site revealed a ditch and a trackway of Roman date at the Heritage Centre. A watching brief located further remains (**MLE9921**). There are further Roman findspots close to the site, including stamped Samian ware (**MLE20499** & **MLE7954**).

The PAS records many Roman artefacts in the area. There are over 40 coins recorded (**BM-B35496**; **FAPJW-D56545**; **FAPJW-D22837**; **FAPJW-D1A231** etc). Other finds include a brooch (**LEIC-73B502**) and two studs (**LEIC-9D5C49** & **LEIC-9E37FE**).

Anglo-Saxon to Medieval

The village is of Anglo-Saxon/ early medieval origin. The place-name 'Sutton' is a very common English place-name meaning, simply 'the south place or farm'. It is normally associated with a larger village or town; in this case Sutton is the village to the south of Market Bosworth (Mills 2003).

In early literature the village is often referred to as Sutton-juxta-Bosworth. The affix 'Cheney', originally 'Cheynell', comes from the name of the farmer that was the tenant on the land at Sutton in the time of Henry III (Nichols 1811).

The site lies within the abandoned village of Ambion, depopulated before the 18th century (**MLE3243**). The village was most likely depopulated by plague, which had severely diminished the population. There is evidence that the village may have been deserted before the Battle of Bosworth in 1485. There are references to a small settlement here, the last being in 1346. There are slight earthwork remains west of Ambion Farm - probable house platforms in an elongated rectangular area. To the south of these is a more-or-less square enclosure within

substantial ditches. This may have been an extension to the original village core. In the 17th century the area is recorded as this was called 'Anbein' or 'Anebein', a lordship of 350 acres, and by the time of Nichols' survey of 1811 it had long been entirely depopulated, but a farm was built here in the 19th century (Hartley 2008). Part of the deserted village is a scheduled monument (List Entry **1008549**). The scheduled area lies adjacent to the assessment area to the west.

Medieval and post-medieval pottery and a horseshoe have been found at King Richard's Well, 180m west of the site (**MLE6803** & **MLE8254**), and from the Heritage Centre (**MLE10513**).

A mass of bones, coins, metal links and chains, were apparently found close to the current Heritage Centre in the mid-19th century by the farmer. They may be associated with the battle, but are unattested and undated (**MLE25873**).

Medieval finds listed on the PAS for the area include a bowl (**LEIC-80F6E8**), and a spindle whorl (**LEIC-9F2407**).

The site lies close to areas covered by the Bosworth Battlefield Survey, carried out from 2005-2010. This project led by Dr Glenn Foard of the Battlefields Trust, ran for these five years, combining documentary, topographical and fieldwork research. The Project aimed to piece together the landscape of 1485, including site such as Shakespeare's famous marsh, where Richard III lost his horse, and to locate any evidence of the Battle. A metal detecting survey of a huge area of land finally recovered a unique collection of medieval cannon balls and a scatter of small items lost by combatants in the Battle. Many of the fields surrounding the village were included in the survey including those to the direct south and north-west of the assessment area (HER Event No. **ELE8443**) (Foard and Curry 2013).

The area of the registered battlefield (List Entry **1000004**) was subsequently redrawn in 2013 and is shown in Figure 2. The site lies fully within the registered battlefield area, in the north-east of the area. The approximate centre of most intense combat is thought to lie 1.7km to the south-west, see Foard (2018).

Aims and Objectives

The main objectives of the archaeological work were defined as follows:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To characterise the extent, date range, character, condition and significance of any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To excavate and record archaeological deposits uncovered during the work.
- To recover artefacts and ecofacts to aid in the dating and interpretation of any archaeological deposits and features encountered.
- To advance understanding of the heritage assets and establish the relationship of any remains within the wider landscape.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

Research Objectives

The site has the potential to add to research objectives mainly from the Roman and medieval periods, identified within *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource*

Assessment and Research Agenda, Leicester Archaeology Monograph 13, (ed. Cooper 2006), and *East Midlands Heritage: An Updated Research Agenda and Strategy for the Historic Environment of the East Midlands* (ed. Knight et al 2012), and updated here: <https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/researchframeworks/eastmidlands/wiki/>:

The presence of possible Roman enclosure remains, plus a possible Roman trackway within the Heritage Centre site indicates that there is a potential for archaeology relating to the Roman period. More significantly, the proposed development area lies within the deserted medieval village of Ambion. There is therefore potential for remains that could contribute to the following Research Objectives:

ROMANO-BRITISH (AD 43-c.410):

5.4.3: *How did rural settlements relate to each other and to towns and military sites, and how may this have varied regionally and over time?*

5.5.4: *Can we chart more closely the processes of agricultural intensification and expansion and the development of field systems?*

5.6.5: *How can we utilise most effectively the regional coin resource as evidence for the transition to a monetary economy?*

HIGH MEDIEVAL (1066–1485):

7.2.4: *Can we clarify further the processes of settlement desertion and shrinkage, especially within zones of dispersed settlement?*

7.4.6: *How should battlefield sites be further investigated?*

These research aims have been identified based on the current state of knowledge within the area of the scheme and will be re-assessed and updated during the course of the fieldwork.

Methodology

All work followed the procedures set out in the approved *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) for the project (ULAS 2023).

All work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (updated 2020) and adhered to their *Code of Conduct* (updated 2021). The accession number XA56.2023 was used to identify all records and artefacts.

Fieldwork was carried out by ULAS on the 3/1/2024 and was followed by post-excavation and reporting.

Date	Site Staff	Times	Description
3/1/24	WJ	8.15-14.45	Sitework

The watching brief involved the observation of the construction works for the scheme by an experienced professional archaeologist. The design for the work was due to involve excavation within the courtyard of a foundation pit for the sculpture base, this pit measuring 1.6m square and with a depth of 0.72m.

Excavation was carried out by the client's contractor, and the work involved hand-digging of the foundation trench. Spoil was removed from the excavation area by barrow and stored off-site.

Monitoring

Internal monitoring procedures were undertaken with the project manager, to ensure that project targets were met and professional standards maintained. No monitoring visits were undertaken, but photos and descriptions of the results were shared with the Planning Archaeologist during the work.

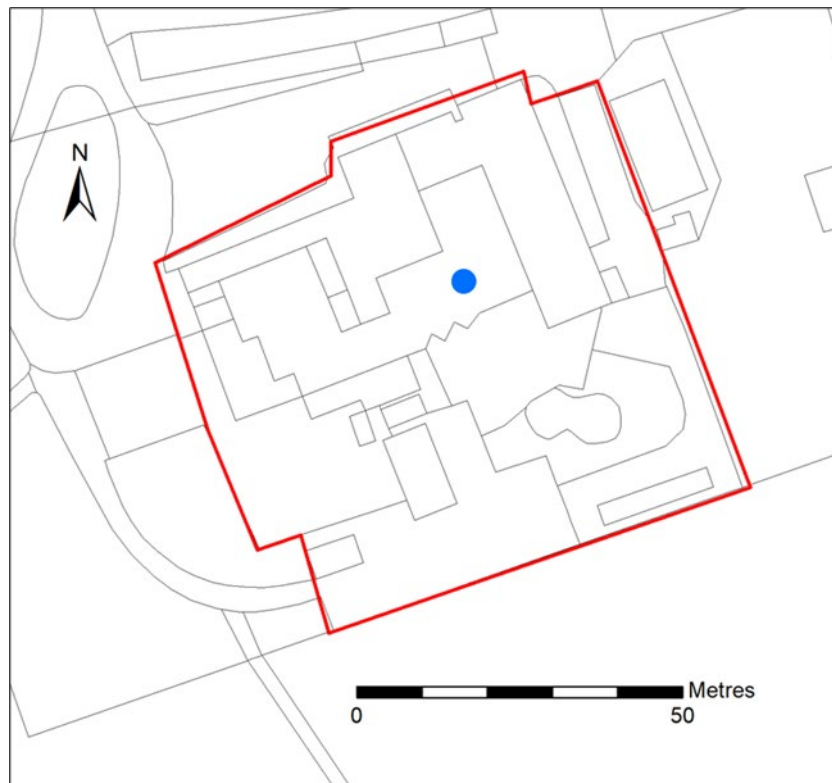


Figure 2: Detailed location plan showing proposals (provided by client)

Results

The area of the proposals was within a brick paved courtyard of the Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, adjacent to the 1485 Tithe Barn Restaurant (Figure 2-Figure 4).

Due to minor alteration and reduction of the depth of the sculpture base foundation pit, the excavated pit measured 1.75m square and with a depth of 0.45m. After removal of the brick paving (0.08m deep), a sand blinding layer was first exposed with a depth of 0.05m (Figure 5). This overlaid a deposit of Type 1 aggregate, crushed hardcore. This aggregate deposit continued to the base of the foundation pit, i.e. at formation depth at 0.45m. At the base of the foundation pit, protruding through this material were a few fragments of modern building material, including fragments of concrete blocks and concrete paving slabs, and fragments of factory manufactured tile. This lower deposit of modern material was not exposed further, but this indicates either levelling of buildings here or that material was imported to site, presumably to raise ground levels. Metal detecting was not carried out on any of the excavated deposits as they consisted only of modern materials either brought in to site or of uncertain origin. No archaeological deposits were exposed and no artefacts were recovered during the work.



Figure 3: Area of proposals prior to groundworks commencing, looking north-west



Figure 4: Area of proposals prior to groundworks commencing, looking north-east



Figure 5: Exposing sand blinding below brick paving, looking south-east



Figure 6: Excavating aggregate base, looking north-west



Figure 7: Excavated foundation pit, showing aggregate continuing below base, looking north (0.2m scale)

Discussion and Conclusions

Fieldwork consisting of Attendance and Recording (Watching Brief) was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at Bosworth 1485 Sculpture Trail (Site 5: 'Piecing together the Past'), Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre. The watching brief was carried out during the excavation of a foundation pit for a new sculpture, sited within the courtyard of the visitor centre.

The excavated pit measured 1.75m square and with a depth of 0.45m, and was hand-dug. Only modern levels were exposed, consisting of made ground for the paved courtyard area. Below the formation depth were indications that modern demolition material was present, perhaps either from nearby structures or imported material. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were recovered during the work.

Archive and Publication

In line with the guidance outlined in 'Leicestershire Transfer of Archaeological Archives to Leicestershire County Council Museum Collections (2024, 22) and the ClfA *Toolkit for selecting archaeological archives*, as the site was negative, the on-site data recorded by hand and digitised in post excavation along with the relevant selected photographic records are presented within the report (see Appendices 1, 2, & 3) rather than deposited as digital files with the ADS.

The online OASIS data entry has been completed detailing the results of the project and the report will be digitally accessible through The Archaeological Data Service (www.archaeologydataservice.ac.uk) with universi1-536108 as the identifier.

A summary of this report will appear in due course in the Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society

Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank the client, Bosworth 1485 (Leicestershire Promotions Limited), Stephen Broadbent (Broadbent Studio), the staff of the Battlefield Heritage Centre, and Ambion Contractors. The fieldwork and post-excavation were undertaken by Wayne Jarvis, and the project was managed by Matthew Beamish both of ULAS.

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ULAS 2023 *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Attendance and Recording (Watching Brief) Bosworth 1485 Sculpture Trail (Site 5)*. ULAS Report 23-724



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