



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Archaeological Services

**Archaeological Monitoring and Recording
(Watching Brief) at St James' Church, Sutton Cheney,
Bosworth Sculpture Trail Site 1, Calm Before the Storm,
Leicestershire.
NGR: SK 41640 00465**

Jamie Patrick



ULAS Report No 2025-066

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Document and Version Control

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Date	Filename/Version	Approved by	Position
22/08/2025	2025-066_V1	Vicki Score	Director

Cover photo: Excavation in progress for Statue Plinth looking north to St James Church

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University of Leicester
Archaeological Services
University Rd., Leicester, LE1 7RH
T: (0116) 2522848 E: ulas@le.ac.uk
W: <https://le.ac.uk/ulas>



OASIS Information

OASIS ID (UID)	universi1-536108
Project Name	Watching Brief at St James' Church, Sutton Cheney
Sitename	St James' Church, Sutton Cheney
Sitecode	ULAS 26-700
Project Identifier(s)	
Activity type	Watching Brief
Planning Id	23/00087/FUL
Reason for Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	University of Leicester Archaeological Services
Project Dates	13-Aug-2025 - 13-Aug-2025
Location	St James' Church, Sutton Cheney NGR: SK 41640 00465 LL: 52.60038600737859, -1.386639295336637 12 Fig: 441640,300465
Administrative Areas	Country: England County/Local Authority: Leicestershire Local Authority District: Hinckley and Bosworth Parish: Sutton Cheney
Project Methodology	The archaeological monitoring and recording involved the observation of the engineering works for the scheme by an experienced professional archaeologist. Excavation was carried out by the client's contractor. Hand tools were used to excavate a 2.50 diameter foundation for the statue. This methodology was employed due to the sensitive nature of potential archaeological remains. The excavation was undertaken in 100mm spits, to a depth of 400mm. After each spit the area was cleaned and inspected by the archaeologist before further excavation could commence.
Project Results	No archaeological remains were encountered with only disturbed top- soils. The upper top soil comprised of a dark greyish brown, loose fine sandy silt with some cbm (tiles). The second spit at 200mm below the surface included a 0.10m thick concentrated layer of cbm including tile and well sorted small to large rounded pebbles. This gave way to a lighter sub-soil comprising of a disturbed light yellowish brown, loose fine sandy silt. There was an increase of modern house bricks and tile with abundant post-medieval & modern pottery including clay pipes and iron nails. A small assemblage of human and animal bone was also present around. No natural sub-strata was encountered when the 400mm depth was reached.
Keywords	
Funder	Private individual
HER	Leicestershire HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Score Vicki
HER Identifiers	
Archives	None

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Archaeological Monitoring and Recording at St James' Church, Sutton Cheney, Bosworth Sculpture Trail Site 1, Calm Before the Storm, Leicestershire.

NGR: SK 41640 00465

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Summary

This report details the results of archaeological monitoring and recording (a watching brief) carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at St James' Church, Sutton Cheney, Bosworth Sculpture Trail Site 1, Calm Before the Storm, Leicestershire. The work was undertaken during the 13th August 2015 on behalf of Leicester Shire Promotions Ltd in advance of hand excavation of footings for a stone statue.

A 2.50 metre diameter foundation pit was excavated to accommodate gravel for the positioning of a stone statue. This was hand excavated in 100mm spits to a depth of 400mm. The exercise proved negative for archaeological remains. Disturbed topsoils were encountered yielding post-medieval and modern pottery, together with clay pipe fragments, iron nails, and a small assemblage of human and animal bone.

Due to the absence of archaeological remains of any significance the archive X.A 150.2022 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- 536108 with the Archaeology Data Service.

Introduction

This document is a report on a programme of archaeological mitigation at St James' Church, Sutton Cheney, Bosworth Sculpture Trail Site 1, Calm Before the Storm, Leicestershire in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): Section 16 Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment (DLUHC 2024).

This work was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on behalf of Leicester Shire Promotions Ltd.

Planning Permission has been granted for the excavation of a circular foundation to accommodate a stone statue within the grounds of St James' Church, Sutton Cheney (The Calm Before the Storm, Site 1) and the permission includes a condition for archaeological work. Due to the archaeological potential, the Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire as advisor to Hinckley & Bosworth District Council has requested archaeological monitoring and recording (a 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. This statue is amongst several others along the Bosworth Trail including sites on land off Fenns Lane, Sutton Cheney (Site 2; Planning Ref 23/00088/FUL, Ambion Lane, Sutton Cheney (Site 5, 23/00089), and at St. James the Great, Dadlington (Site 4; DAC Ref 2018-024355). The sculptures are intended to follow the course of the battle across the installation sites. This site, Site 1, is entitled "The Calm Before the Storm" and represents the prelude before the battle. The sculpture will be a larger-than-life cloaked kneeling figure.

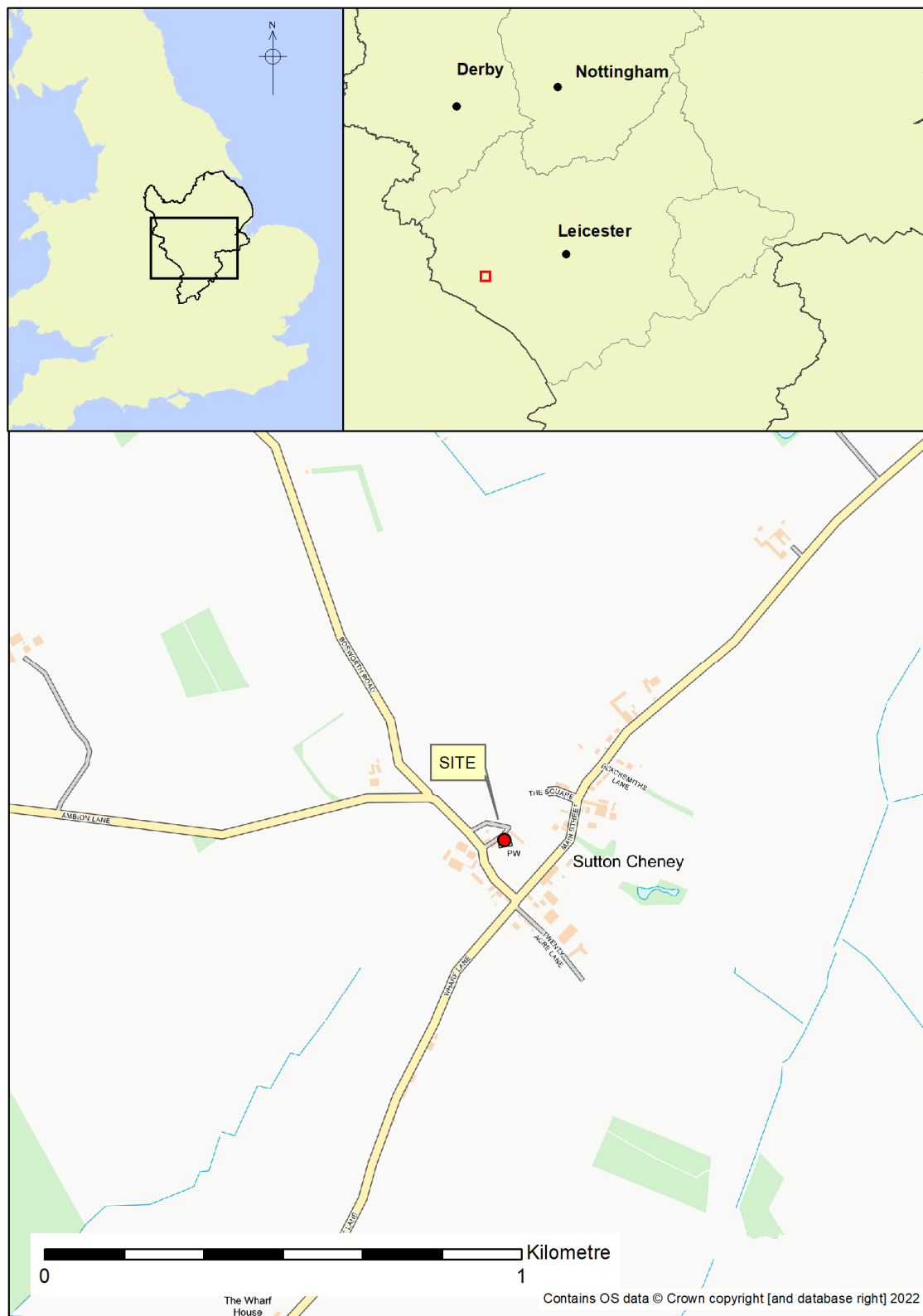
Location, topography and geology

The village of Sutton Cheney lies in the Hinckley and Bosworth District of Leicestershire around 3km south-east of Market Bosworth and 4.3km north-west of Hinckley (Figure 1). The site is accessed from the north-eastern side of Bosworth Road or via a pathway from Main Street, to the south-east. The rectangular church yard site covers a total area of approximately 0.35ha in the centre of the village and includes the church building set towards the north-west side of the church yard. The proposed sculpture will be located close to a pathway leading into the church yard from the south-east (Figure 2). The statue is located to the eastern side of the pathway from Main Street on level ground within the church yard. The site is at approximately 120m above OD.

The British Geological Survey indicates that the underlying geology of the area is likely to be Gunthorpe Member Mudstone overlain by Glaciofluvial Deposits of sand and gravel

(BGS; <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/bgs-geology-viewer/> accessed 13/12/2022).

The Soilscape website indicates that the soils within the assessment area are likely to be Soilscape 18: which consists of slowly permeable and seasonally wet slightly acidic but quite base-rich loamy and clayey soils <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscales/> accessed 13/12/2022).



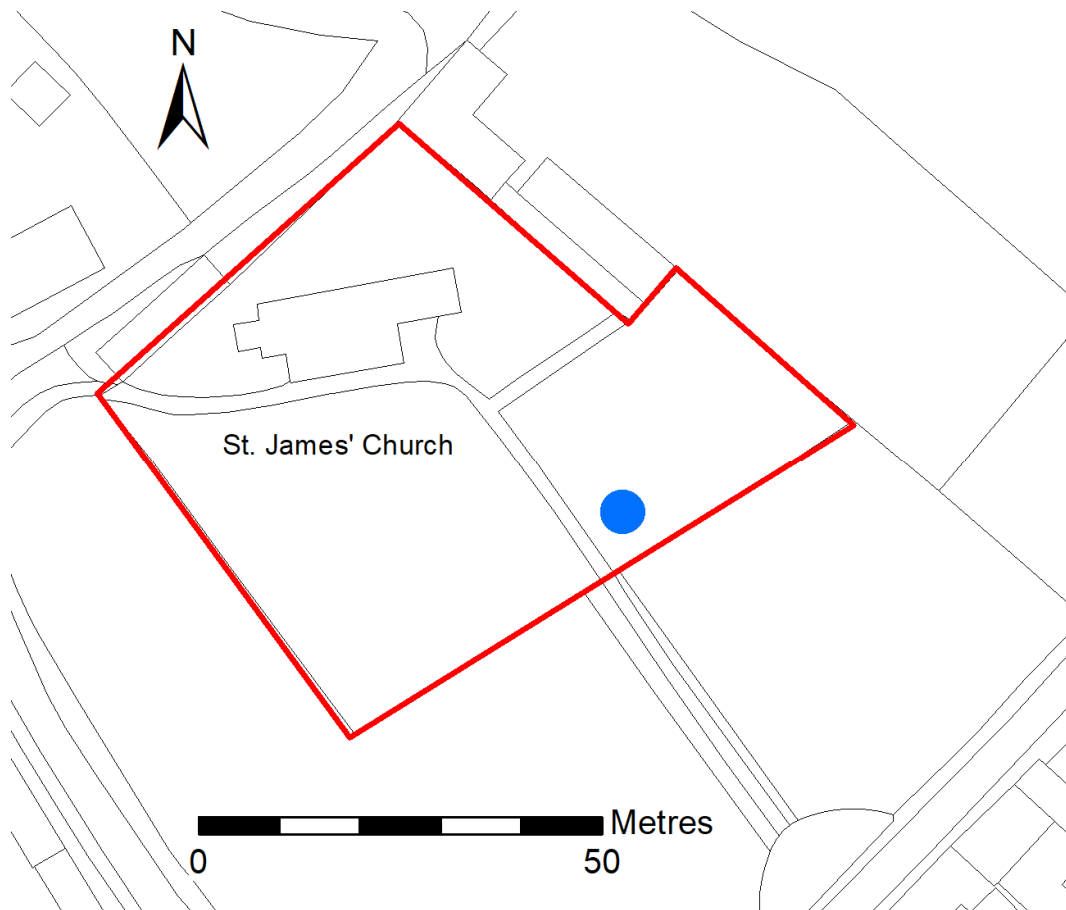


Figure 2: Detailed site location plan showing proposals (provided by client).

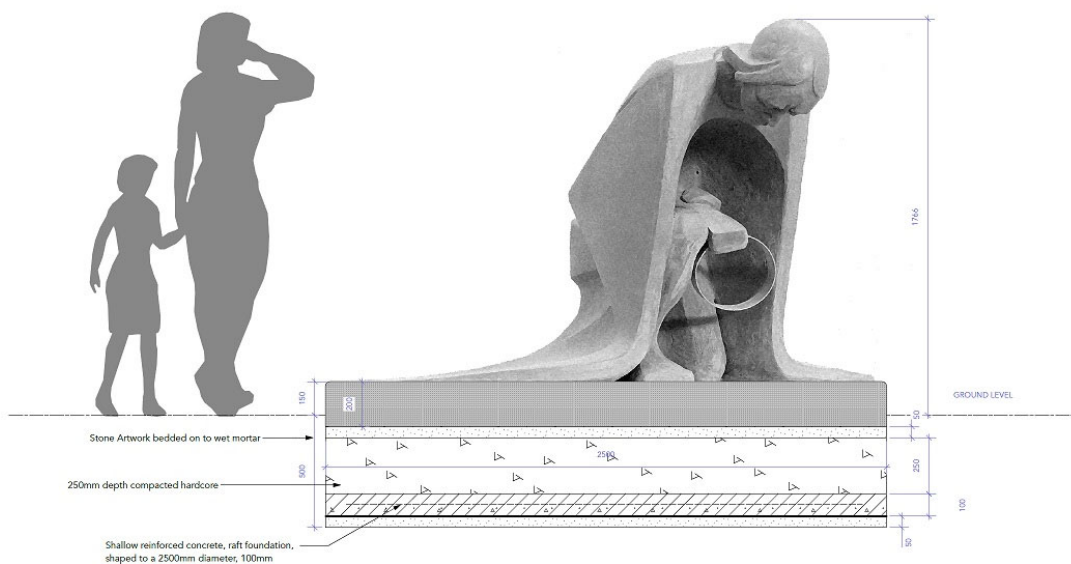


Figure 3: Proposed sculpture. The foundation comprises a 2.5m diameter footprint, 500mm deep. Supplied by client



Figure 4: Pre-groundworks. Looking North-east

Historical and Archaeological Background

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). The village, and the churchyard site, fall within the Sutton Cheney Conservation Area. The Sculpture titled 'Calm before the Storm' represents one of several located along the Battle of Bosworth Sculpture Trail. Richard III is said to have prayed in St. James' Church in Sutton Cheney prior to the Battle of Bosworth and drank from a well in the ancient village of Ambien that lies within the parish.

Previous archaeological monitoring in advance of the erection of three other statues along the Sculpture trail (Sites 2, 4, & 5) all proved negative for archaeological remains. Other archaeological work undertaken within the grounds of St James Church, Sutton Cheney, during storm water drainage, and Small scale evaluative work and a watching brief behind former alms houses to the North-east also proved negative for remains.

Prehistoric and Roman

There is one scheduled monument just within the 250m radius of the development site which is a Neolithic-Bronze Age bowl barrow lying around 250m north-west of the church (SM 1010199).

There are no recorded Roman sites within a 250m radius of the sculpture site.

Anglo-Saxon to Medieval

To the south & east of the Church are earthworks including those of medieval house platforms resulting from shrinkage of the village since the medieval period (MLE3252) & (MLE3232). Former medieval field boundaries lie to the north of the church (MLE3249).

Post-medieval to modern

North-east of the site is a post-medieval cow burial to the rear of an alms house (MLE25810), with extant remains of post-medieval houses both to the north-east and south of the site (MLE17228).

Aims and Objectives

The main aim of the investigation was to record any archaeological remains that would be disturbed by the scheme, provide evidence to understand the nature, date, function, and character of the archaeological remains present and to mitigate the impact of the development using preservation by record.

The main objectives of the archaeological work were:

- 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.
- Interpret the archaeology of the site within its local, regional, and national, archaeological context.
- To advance understanding of the heritage assets and establish the relationship of any remains within the wider landscape.
- To produce a report and archive of the results.

Research Objectives

The site has the potential to add to research objectives mainly from the prehistoric, medieval, and post-medieval/modern 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 Neolithic/Bronze Age earthworks in the vicinity of the site indicates that there is a potential for archaeology relating to this periods. The central location within the medieval settlement at the church would indicate a good potential for medieval archaeology within the site. Post-medieval features recorded during archaeological evaluation, in addition to the listed post-medieval buildings within Sutton Cheney, indicate a high potential for further archaeology relating to the period. However the relatively shallow impact of the development and likelihood of disturbance of the ground by historic burial activity decreases the potential for archaeological remains to survive. There is therefore some limited potential for remains that could contribute to the following Research Objectives:

Neolithic/ Bronze-age

3F Identify monument complexes and prioritise for curatorial action

3G Conduct additional investigations of Neolithic funerary traditions

Medieval

6J Update and expand East Midlands Anglo-Saxon Pottery Project.

7E Investigate the morphology of rural settlements.

Post-Medieval

8C Establish a typology of regional building traditions.

Methodology

The fieldwork followed the procedures set out in the approved *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) for the project (26-700).

All work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Universal guidance for archaeological monitoring and recording* (2023), *Standard for Archaeological monitoring and recording* (2023) and *Code of Conduct : professional ethics in archaeology* (updated 2022) <https://www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa>. The accession number X.A 150. 2022 was used to identify all records and artefacts.

Fieldwork was carried out by ULAS during the 13th August 2025 and was followed by post-excavation and reporting.

Date	Site Staff	Times	Description
13 th August 2025	J. R. P	1 day	Sitework
14 th -15 August 2025	J. R. P	1.5 days	Report

The archaeological monitoring and recording involved the observation of the engineering works for the scheme by an experienced professional archaeologist.

Excavation was carried out by the client's contractor. Hand tools were used to excavate a 2.50 diameter foundation for the statue. This methodology was employed due to the sensitive nature of potential archaeological remains. The excavation was undertaken in 100mm spits, to a depth of 400mm. After each spit the area was cleaned and inspected by the archaeologist before further excavation continued.



Figure 5: Working Shot. Looking West

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 descriptions of the results were shared with Planning Archaeologist during the work

Results

No archaeological remains were identified during the investigation. The stratigraphy consisted primarily of disturbed topsoil. The upper horizon comprised a dark greyish-brown, loose fine sandy silt containing ceramic tile fragments. At approximately 200mm below ground level, a concentrated 0.10m thick layer of ceramic tile and well-sorted, rounded pebbles of varying sizes was encountered. Beneath this, the subsoil transitioned to a lighter, disturbed yellowish-brown fine sandy silt with an increased presence of modern building materials, including house bricks and ceramic tiles, along with a substantial quantity of post-medieval and modern artefacts such as pottery sherds, clay pipe fragments, and iron nails. A small assemblage of both human and animal bone was also recovered. The human bone was retained on site for reburial within the churchyard.

Natural sub-strata were not reached within the 400mm excavation depth.



Figure 6: Base of Statue foundation at 400mm. 1m scale. Looking NW

Discussion

No archaeological remains were identified during the investigation. The topsoil was heavily disturbed and contained substantial quantities of ceramic building material (CBM) and modern house brick fragments along with post-medieval and modern artefacts, including pottery sherds, broken clay pipe fragments, and iron nails. Although only a small quantity of disarticulated human bone was encountered, its presence—alongside iron nails—may suggest re-deposition associated with later interments, potentially following disturbance of earlier graves.

The nails are likely to have originated from coffin fittings. Comparable material was recorded during archaeological works at the churchyard of St James the Great, Dadlington, in advance of the statue installation at Site 4 (Flavell 2024).

Archive & 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

The fieldwork and post-excavation were undertaken by Jamie Patrick and project managed by Vicki Score for ULAS. The artefacts were identified by name.

The author would like to thank Leicester Shire Promotions Ltd and Ambion Plant Hire for their help and co-operation during the project.

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East Midlands Historic Environment Research Framework

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ULAS 2023 *ULAS Recording Manual*.

ULAS 26-700 *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Recording, & Attendance (Watching Brief) at St James' Church Sutton Cheney, Bosworth Sculpture Trail Site 1, Calm Before The Storm*

Appendix 1: Photo Index.

Photo Number	Description	Orient	Scale	
1	Pre-ground-works	South	-	Fig. 1
2	Working shot	East	-	Appendix 2
3	Working shot	West	-	Appendix 2
4	After Spit 1	NE	1m	Appendix 2
5	After Spit 2	NW	1m	Appendix 2
6	After Spit 3 - Base of Statue foundation at 400mm.	NW	1m	Fig. 6

Appendix 2: Photos

Photo 2: Working shot, Looking East



Photo 3: Working shot, Looking West



Photo 4: Spit 1, Looking NW. 1m scale



Photo 5 Spit 2, Looking NW. 1m scale

Appendix 3: Watching Brief scanned sheets

ULAS: WATCHING BRIEF RECORDING FORM

SITE NAME	ST JAMES CHURCH	Acc No.	X.A150.2022
LOCATION	SUTTON CHENEY	DATE	13/8/25
ARRIVAL TIME	8.30	DEPARTURE TIME	
VISIT NUMBER (ie 1st, 2nd)	1	CONTACT DETAILS	
TYPE OF MACHINE /BUCKET	HAND EXCAVATION		
WHO'S ON SITE?	DAVE TALAN		
WATCHING WHAT?	TOP-500 (DISTURBED)		

WORK TYPE: FOOTINGS FOR STATUE PLANTH.

DOORSTEPS: 2.50m DIAMETER, DEPTH 400mm

SHAPE: CIRCULAR

METHODS: (ARCH REGISTRATION) 100mm SPITS, HAND CLEAN

NOTES:-

STATUE LOCATED APPROX 5m NORTH FROM HEDGEROW BOUNDING CHURCH YARD. GROUND SLIGHTLY UNDULATING. SHARPER TO SPIT 2. SUB-WEATHER CONCRETE: DRY SURF. EXCAVATION BEGAN BY HAND AT 9.30. FOLLOWING LAYERS NOT OF AREA. DE-TURFING TO AREA 100mm 0.5m² TINS. NORTHERN HALF FIRST. TOP 500: DARK GREYISH BROWN. SPIT 2 > 100mm TOP SOIL ind. tile 2 the odd brick. APPEAR. DESTROYED. POST-MED POT. (ANIMAL) FREE) SHAN LARS WITH KIDNEY STONES. - MASS CROWN > 100mm THICK. COFFIN NAIL, SHAN BONE. Began to find.

SPIT 3 > 300mm. SANDY MATERIAL. SHOWING THROUGH. SUB-500 DISTURBED. 14B LOOSE FINE SANDY SOIL. CAN SEE BONE. NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS FOUND. DISTURBED SOILS.

PHOTOS:-

B/W No:	Colour No:	Description	Orientation	Scale
1		PRE-EXCAVATION WORK	N	
2		PRE-EXCAVATION WORK	NW	
3		PRE-EXCAVATION WORK	E	
4		PRE-EXCAVATION WORK	E	
5		LAYERS OF STATUE FOUNDATION	E	
6		CUTTING 2.50m DIAMETER CIRCULAR CONC	E	
7		WORKING SPIT	E	
8		WORKING SPIT	E	
9		DE-TURFING	E	

Page 9 OF 9 SEE OVER FOR SHEET

10. 100mm spit 1, TS. 100mm

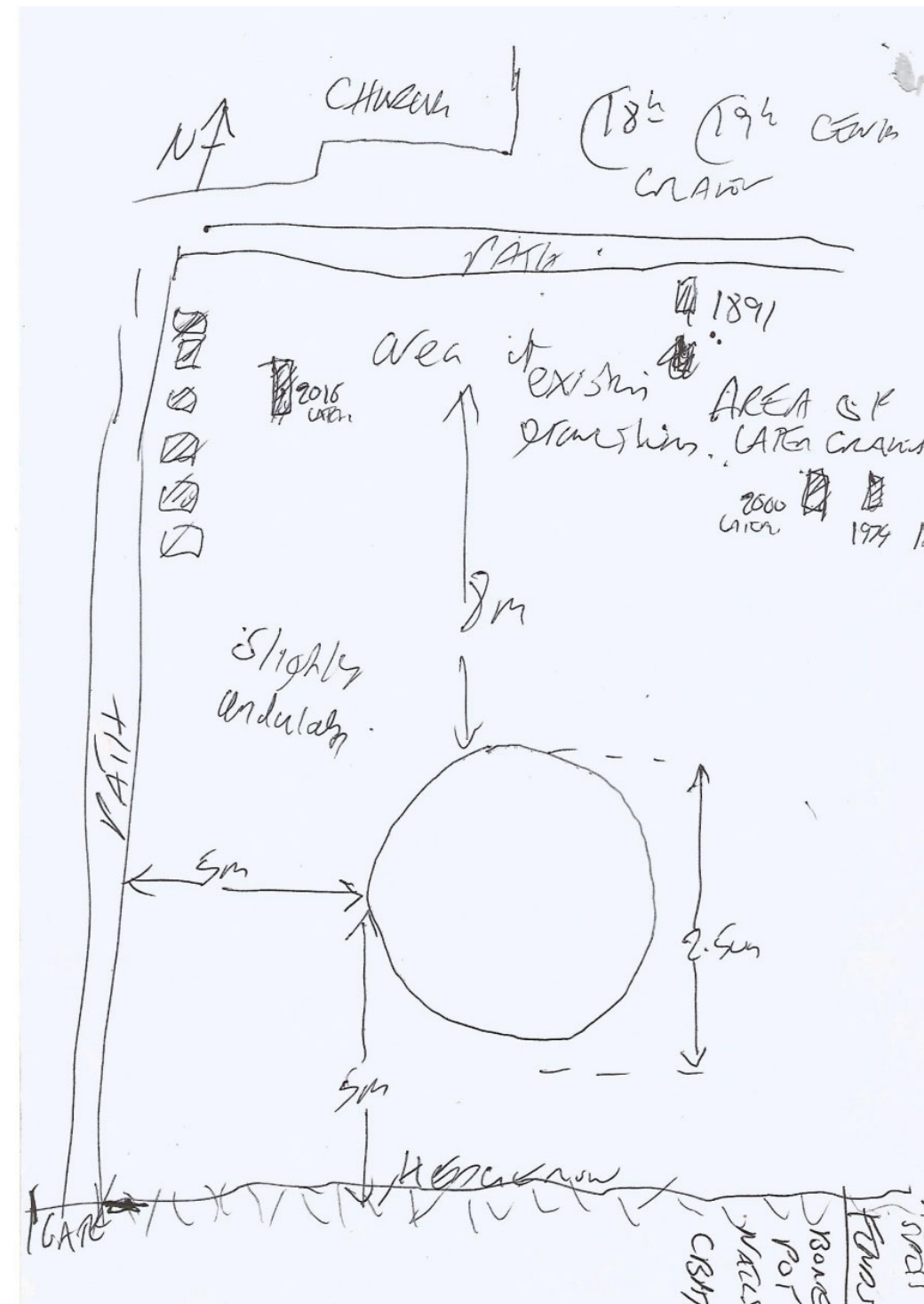
11. WORKING SPIT 100mm

12. 100mm spit 2, TS. 100mm

13. WORKING SPIT 2, TS. 100mm

14. WORKING SPIT 3, TS. 100mm

15. WORKING SPIT 4, TS. 100mm





UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Archaeological Services

University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester LE1 7RH
UK

t: +44 (0)116 252 2848

f: +44 (0)116 252 2614

e: ulas@le.ac.uk



FAME

