



**University of  
Leicester**

**Archaeological Services**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief  
at Sapcote Playing Fields,  
Hinckley Road,  
Sapcote,  
Leicestershire**

**NGR SP 4871 9345**

Jennifer Browning

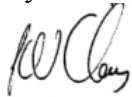


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**NGR SP 4871 9345**

*Jennifer Browning*

**For: Sapcote Parish Council**

Approved by:
<b>Signed:</b> 
<b>Date:</b> 06.08.2013
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**An Archaeological Watching Brief at Sapcote Playing Fields, Hinckley Road, Sapcote, Leicestershire (NGR SP 4871 9345)**

Jennifer Browning

**Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by ULAS during groundworks for a new store, adjacent to an existing pavilion at Sapcote Playing Fields, Hinckley Road, Sapcote, Leicestershire (NGR SP 4871 9345). The development is located north-east of the site of Sapcote castle. Despite the location of the development in an archaeologically-sensitive area, no archaeological finds or deposits were encountered during the course of the watching brief. The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under the Accession Number X. A89. 2013.*

**1. Introduction**

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), (DCLG 2012) at Sapcote Playng Fields, Hinckley Road, Sapcote, Leicestershire (NGR SP 4871 9345). Groundworks for a new store/garage adjacent to the existing building took place in July 2013 (P.A 12/0931/1). The watching brief was undertaken by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Sapcote Parish Council.

The application site lies within an area of archaeological potential, as indicated by its close proximity to Sapcote Castle and within the scheduled area. The Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council and English Heritage therefore recommended that archaeological work should be undertaken to determine if any buried heritage assets were likely to be affected by the proposed development. A strategy for a programme of archaeological attendance, inspection and recording during groundworks was set out in the Written Scheme for Investigation (Clay 2013), hereinafter WSI.

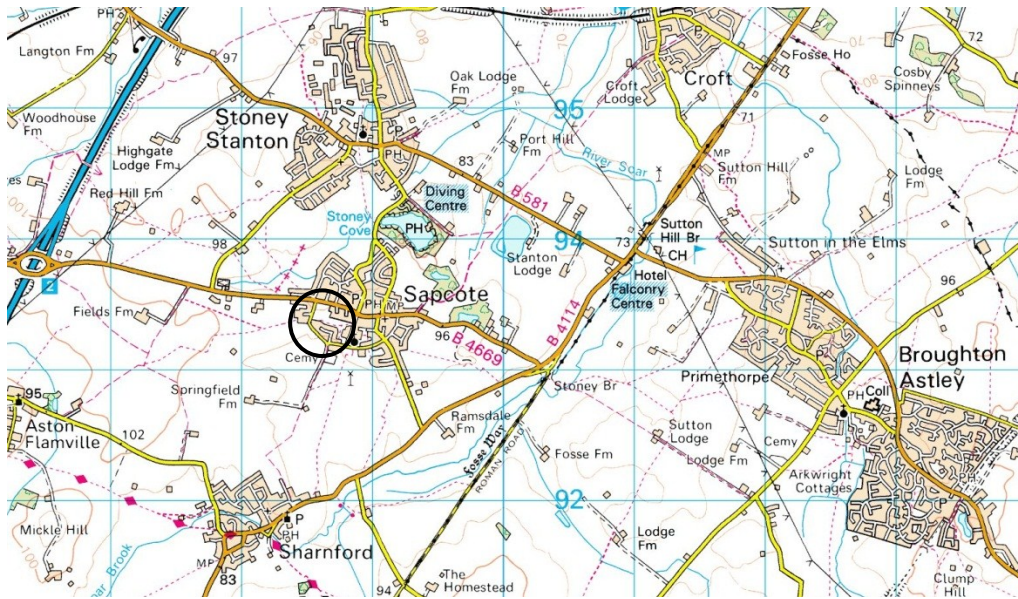


Figure 1: Location plan Scale 1:50000 (site area ringed)

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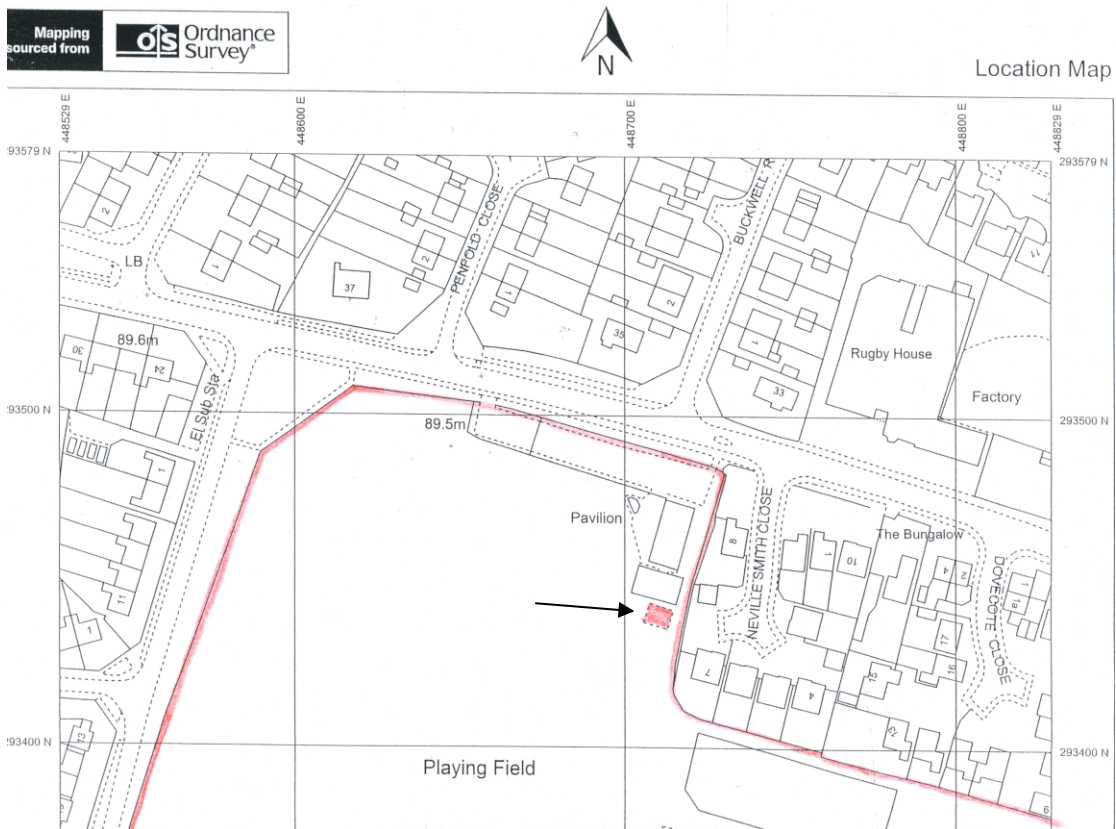


Figure 2: Location of the new structure (plan supplied by client)

## 2. Site Description, Topography and Geology

The development area is located on the west side of Sapcote, within the playing fields off Hinckley Road. The structure is located close to the north-eastern boundary of the playing fields and directly southwest of the pavilion (Figure 2). It occupies an area of relatively flat land at a height of approximately 89.5m OD. The development area measures approximately 8m x 8m (64sq m.) of which 12.8 sq m was to be into undisturbed ground.

The British Geological Survey of Great Britain indicates that the bedrock geology consists of mudstone of the Mercia Mudstone formation. This is a sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 206 to 248 million years ago in the Triassic Period. The superficial geology consists of Diamicton of the Thrussington Member formation. Superficial Deposits formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period.

(<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Accessed on 5th August 2013).

## 3. Historical and Archaeological Background

The Historic Environment Record (HER) indicates that the application site lies in an area of archaeological interest. Sapcote Castle and Moat was designated as a nationally important monument in 1992 and is described as follows:

“Sapcote Castle lies within the village, 100m north of the church. The motte and bailey castle is situated in a field called Toot Hill Close; the adjoining moat lies in Park Close or Noble Park to the west. Toot Hill Close is 140 x 80m and contains the remains of a motte, partly modified in *c.*1778, but currently surviving as a mound rising to about 1m. The bailey ditch has been infilled in recent years and can be seen as a grass mark 100m to the west of the motte. Park Close, measuring 150m square, contains three sides of a late medieval moat, constructed adjacent to the castle bailey, which was infilled in *c.*1960 and survives as a grass mark along the course of its northern arm. Reports dating from the 1920's onwards indicate the presence of stone castle buildings in the vicinity of the motte. The bailey originally extended to the north but this part was heavily modified by the construction of a factory during World War II. A bank in this northern part which survived World War II, outside the area of the scheduling, was destroyed in 1964, and a watching brief revealed a stone-lined well, a granite cobbled road, and a wall and a ditch, all of 13th-15th century date. Excavations were carried out in the north-east part of Toot Hill Close, by the Leicester Archaeological Excavation Group from 1967-74, revealing a 13th century wall and turret and an earlier stone hearth and flue. In 1978, a watching brief by Leicestershire Museums during the construction of a scout hut adjacent to the motte also revealed the stone foundations of a building. Excavations were also carried out in 1958, prior to the filling of the moat in Park Close. Records of the moat being partly filled in the late 18th century were confirmed by excavation and the original depth of the ditch was found to be about 3m and the width 8m. A later date than the castle is indicated by excavation which showed the moat to post-date a 13th century ditch. A second moat also adjoined the first to the south but is now totally built over. Excluded from the scheduling are: the Scout hut; a concrete path leading to a house next to Toot Hill Close; the pavilion; a drinking fountain; and a concrete base for swings. The ground beneath these features is, however, included.” (HER Ref: DLE 260)

In 2000 geophysical survey undertaken at the site identified some anomalies consistent with known infilled moats and other anomalies likely to relate to ditches, stone walls and rubble spreads (Note in *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* 74; 2000).

As it was deemed likely that the proposed development could have a damaging effect on any archaeological deposits, should they exist, an archaeological watching brief was required by the planning authority and English Heritage as a condition of Scheduled Monument Consent. The watching brief followed an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI ULAS 2013), in order to identify and record any structural or archaeological remains of significance.

#### **4. Aims and Objectives**

The purpose of the current archaeological work was:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To advance understanding of the heritage assets
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

#### **5. Methodology**

The work followed the WSI (Clay 2013) and adhered to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (rev. 2010) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (rev. 2008).

The programme of work consisted of the examination of the excavation of foundation trenches around an existing concrete slab, which had formed the base of a former structure in the same location. The trenches were visually inspected, hand-cleaned where appropriate and recorded following standard ULAS protocols.

#### **6. Results**

The site was visited on the 18th July 2013. The new footing trenches were excavated around an existing concrete slab, 0.2m thick, which had formed the base of a previous structure. The trenches were 0.4m wide and varied in depth between 0.8m and 1.0m below current ground level. The turf and topsoil was *c.* 0.2m thick, overlying subsoil in the eastern and southern trenches, which consisted of light grey brown sandy clay, with moderate quantities of medium pebbles, 0.2m thick. The northern trench, located between the concrete slab and the extant building, was disturbed by a 0.4m layer of hardcore overlying a (drain) pipe, which led to a manhole at the northeast corner. Hardcore was also noted towards the top of the western trench. The natural subsoil was encountered at 0.4m below ground level and consisted of bright yellowish brown clayey sand with orange sandy mottle and occasional manganese. The natural subsoil appeared undisturbed and no archaeological deposits or finds were observed in the trenches.

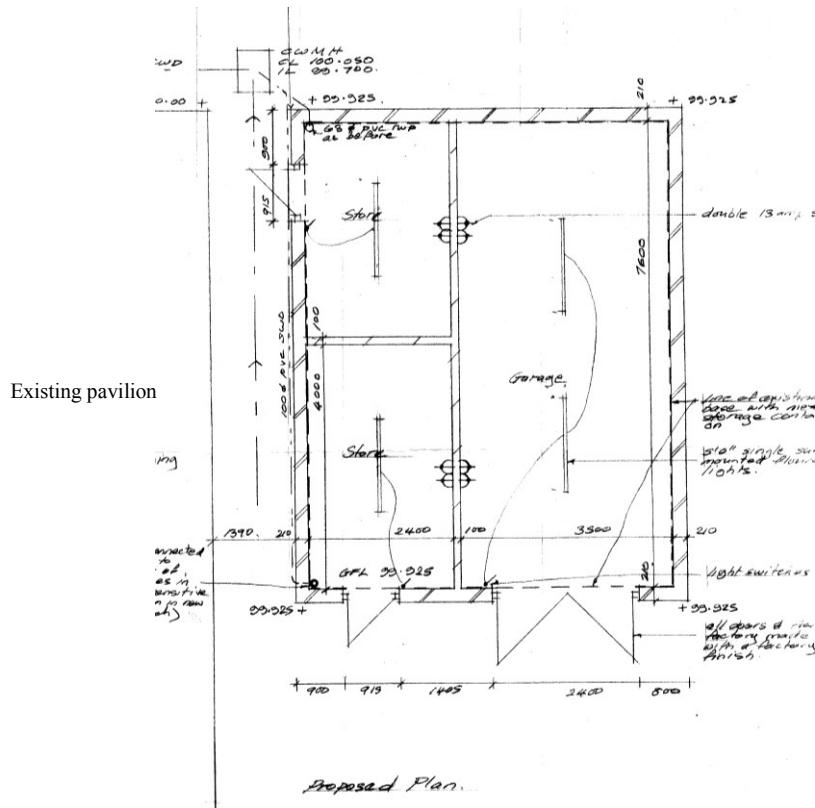


Figure 3: Plan of the new structure (supplied by client)



Figure 4: General view of the development





Figure 5: Example section (western trench)

## 7. Conclusion

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken during groundworks for a new store, located to the rear of the existing pavilion. The footings were excavated around an existing concrete slab and the impact of the development therefore appeared minimal.

No archaeological deposits were encountered and no finds were recovered during the watching brief, despite its location close to the site of the castle.

## 8. Archive

The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council HNET, with the Accession No. X. A89 2013

The archive contains site notes (watching brief pro forma sheets), digital photographs and photo index.

The report is listed on the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York. Available at: <http://oasis.ac.uk/>

### *OASIS Information*

Project Name	Sapcote Playing Fields
Project Type	Archaeological Attendance (watching brief)
Project Manager	P. Clay
Project Supervisor	J. Browning
Previous/Future work	-
Current Land Use	Pavilion/playing fields
Development Type	Store/garage
Reason for Investigation	As a planning and scheduled monument consent condition
Position in the Planning Process	Full determination
Site Co ordinates	NGR SP 4871 9345
Start/end dates of field work	18.07.2013
Archive Recipient	LCC
Study Area	64 square metres (c.8m x 8m)

## **9. Publication**

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* and *Rutland Record* in due course. The report has been added to the Archaeology Data Service's (ADS) Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database held by the University of York.

## **10. Bibliography**

Brown, D., 2008 *Standard and guidance for the preparation of Archaeological Archives* (Institute for Archaeologists)

Clay, P. 2013 *Written scheme of investigation for archaeological attendance, inspection and recording (watching brief) at Sapcote Playing Fields, Hinckley Road, Sapcote, Leicestershire (NGR SP 4871 9345): Erection of new store / garage*

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), (rev. 2012), *Code of Conduct*

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), (rev. 2008), *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

## **11. Acknowledgements**

The fieldwork was carried out by Jennifer Browning for ULAS. Patrick Clay managed the project. I would like to thank the contractors on site for their help and co-operation during the work.

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