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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Watching Brief during the Excavation of a Cable Trench
in the Churchyard of St. Helen's, Sharnford**

Mireya González Rodríguez



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Trench in the Churchyard of St. Helen's, Sharnford**

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For: Western Power Distribution

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on behalf of Midland Stonemasonry Limited, during the excavation of a trench across the churchyard of St Helen's Church, Sharnford, Leicestershire (NGR SK 4836 9185) on the 7th and 8th of July 2014. The work involved the hand excavation of a small trench running north-south on the western side of the graveyard. The work was monitored by an archaeologist. No archaeological deposits were disturbed by the groundworks. The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under the Accession Number X A108 2014.

1 Introduction

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services during groundworks associated with the laying of approximately 85 metres of low voltage underground cable. The watching brief was requested by the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor who suggested that archaeological observation would be necessary to determine if human remains were likely to be disturbed or affected by the proposed works.

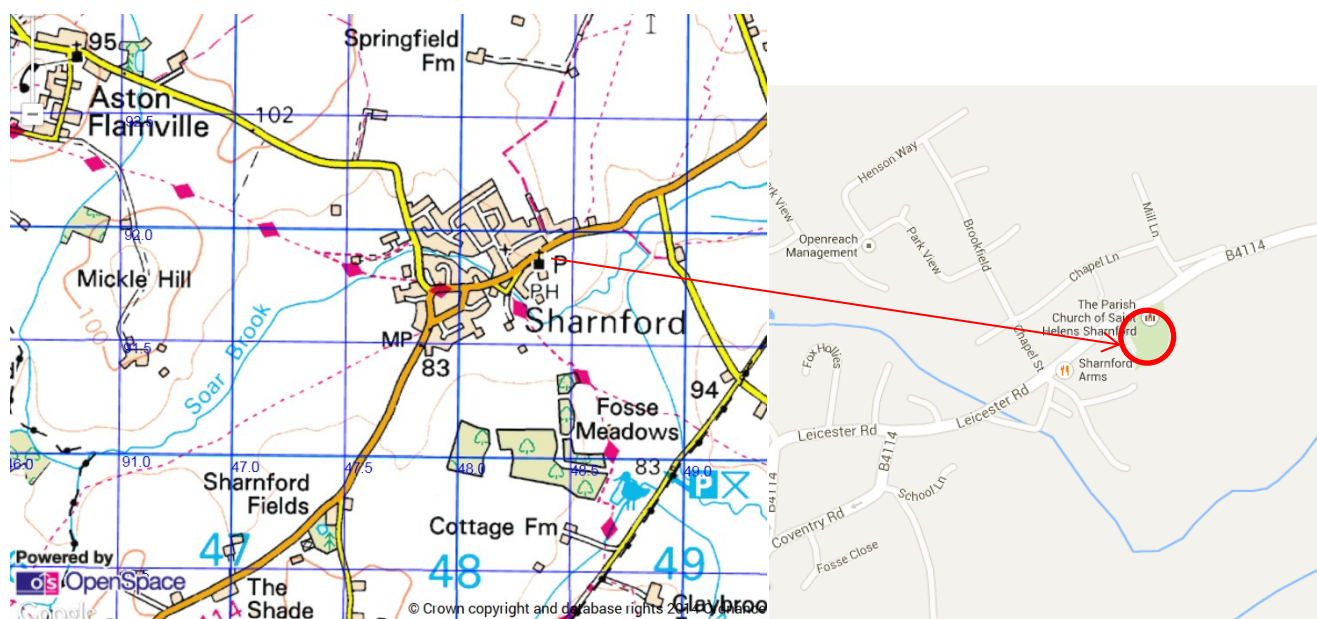


Figure 1. Site Location

2 Site Description, Topography and Geology

The watching brief took place on the graveyard associated with the church of St. Helen's. The site lies within the historic core of the village of Sharnford.

The church of St. Helen's is a 13th century grade II listed building.



Figure 2. Location of the proposed development

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

The Diocesan Archaeological Advisor, as consultant to the planning authority requested a watching brief as mitigation against potential disturbance to buried archaeological remains. Whilst the trench was located to minimise the possibility of damage to existing graves, there was a strong likelihood of unmarked earlier burials along its line.

4. Previous archaeological work

No previous archaeological work has been carried out on the graveyard of St. Helen's.

5. Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the current archaeological work was:

- To identify the presence/absence of human remains.
- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To record if any graves were to be affected by the ground works.
- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

The work was considered likely to encounter human remains associated with the graveyard and there was a possibility that earlier features associated with the church could be revealed.

6. Methodology

The programme of work comprised the excavation of a north-south trench measuring 85m long, 0.40m deep and 0.30m wide. The trench was manually excavated and backfilled.

The trench was visually inspected and the removed soil was described and checked for signs of archaeological activity or potential. Field notes were recorded on pro-forma ULAS recording forms.

The work adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (rev. 2008).



Figure 3. Proposed site plan provided by client.

The former overhead cable running east-west (Figure 3) has been moled and no disturbance to the ground was caused.

7. Results

Summary

Fill/made ground: c.0.40m deep.

No archaeological deposits were observed.

Description

The topsoil and made ground was 0.40m deep and consisted of a 0.40m layer of brown sandy clay with rare to frequent subangular cobbles and stone.

Interpretation

Graveyard soils and topsoil.

8. Conclusion

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on the churchyard of St. Helen's, Sharnford. No deposits of archaeological origin were identified during the work.

9. Archive

The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council, under the Accession No: X.A108.2014

The archive contains site notes (watching brief pro forma recording sheets), digital photographs and photograph 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/>

10. 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 will be added to the Archaeology Data Service's (ADS) Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database held by the University of York.

OASIS Information

<i>Project Name</i>	St. Helen's Churchyard
<i>Project Type</i>	Archaeological Watching Brief
<i>Project Manager</i>	R. Buckley
<i>Project Supervisor</i>	M González Rodríguez
<i>Previous/Future work</i>	Previous
<i>Current Land Use</i>	Graveyard
<i>Development Type</i>	Electrical Installation
<i>Reason for Investigation</i>	NPPF
<i>Position in the Planning Process</i>	Condition
<i>Site Co ordinates</i>	NGR SP
<i>Start/end dates of field work</i>	14.07.2014
<i>Archive Recipient</i>	Leicester City Council
<i>Study Area</i>	

11. Bibliography

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12. Acknowledgements

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Figure 4. Churchyard, Facing south, indicating the location of the trench



Figure 5. Location of trench



Figure 6. Churchyard with location of trench, facing north