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**An Archaeological Watching Brief
During Groundworks at
St Peter's Cross, Derby**

NGR SK 3533 3602

Jennifer Browning



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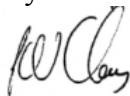
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**For:
Derby City Council**

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Derby City Council during groundworks associated with the creation of 'St Peter's Cross', a pedestrianized area at the junction of St Peter's Churchyard, East Street and St. Peter's Street, Derby (NGR SK 3533 3602). The site is adjacent to the Church of St. Peter's in the City and therefore the groundworks had the potential to disturb human burials and associated archaeology. However, no archaeologically significant finds or evidence for earlier structures were encountered during the course of the watching brief. Disarticulated human bones recovered during the work were collected and stored at the church for re-burial following completion of the work.

1. Introduction

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out in April 2014, adjacent to the Church of St. Peter's in the City, Derby. The work was undertaken by University of Leicester Archaeological Services. The work comprised archaeological monitoring of groundworks associated with the creation of 'St Peter's Cross', a pedestrianized area at the junction of St Peter's Churchyard, East Street and St. Peter's Street. This is part of the regeneration works of Derby St Peter's Quarter project.

Steve Baker, Derby and Derbyshire Development Control Archaeologist, has advised Andy Smart, Derby City Regeneration Projects Manager that the groundworks in the area of the Churchyard require archaeological attendance, inspection and recording. In anticipation of the recovery of human remains an application was made to the Ministry of Justice for a license to exhume and examine any human remains. The licence (No: 14-0074) was granted on the 11th April and covers the period to the 30th April 2014. The remains, if found, will be bagged up and stored at the Church of St Peter's in the City.

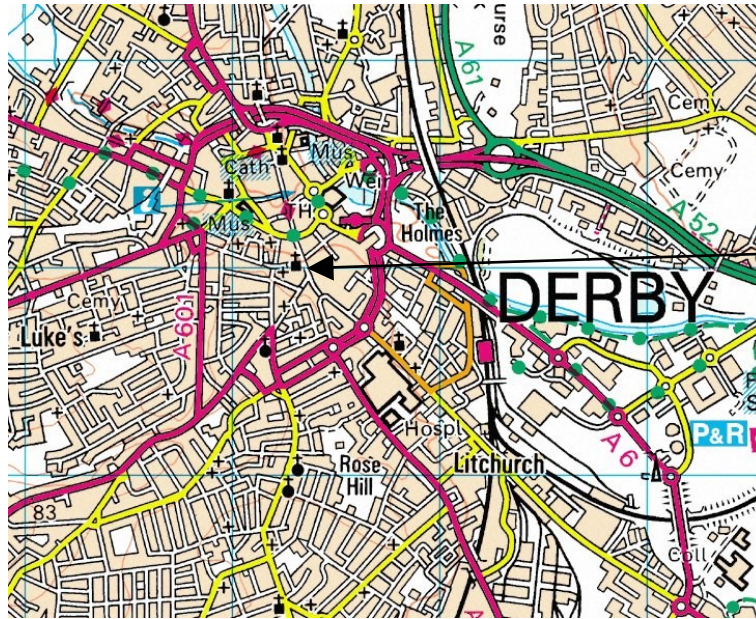


Figure 1: Location plan with Site arrowed

Reproduced from the Explorer OS map 232 1:25 000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 10002186.

2. Site Description, Topography and Geology

The Geological Survey of Great Britain indicates that the underlying geology consists of mudstone of the Mercia Mudstone Group, a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 200 to 251 million years ago in the Triassic Period, indicating a local environment previously dominated by hot deserts. No superficial deposits are recorded. <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>. (Accessed 15th April 2014).

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

The Church of St Peter was first recorded in the reign of Edward the Confessor and is likely to be one of the churches recorded in the Domesdays Book. <http://www.stpetersderby.org.uk/> (Accessed 28th April 2014).

The first edition Ordnance Survey town plan of Derby (1883), as well as earlier town plans (Cole and Roper 1806 and Speed 1610), indicates that St Peter's Street, situated adjacent to the east end of the church, has been a thoroughfare for several hundred years and therefore unlikely to have been used as a burial ground since the medieval period.

4. Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the current archaeological work was:

The purpose of the archaeological work may be summarised as follows:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the groundworks.
- To describe, record and if possible provide a date range for the stratigraphy.

- Recover any exposed human remains (skeletal) and retain for re-internment.
- To advance understanding of the heritage assets
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

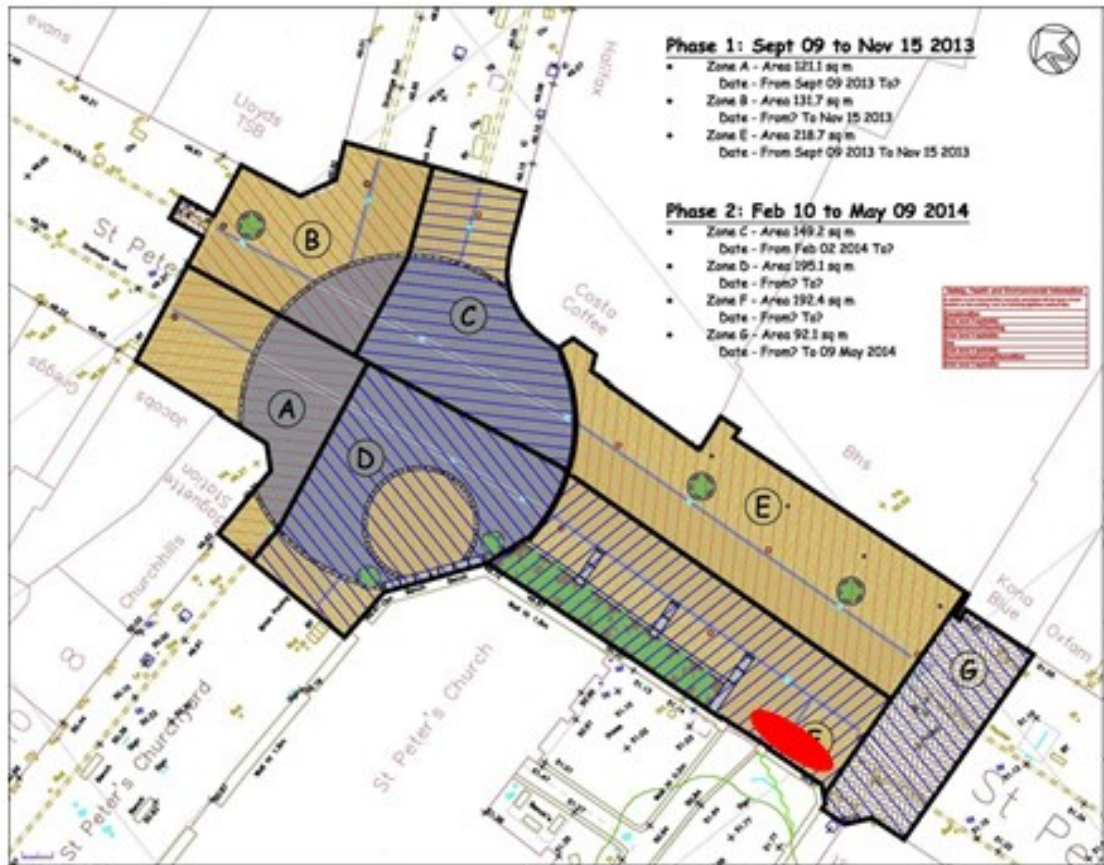


Figure 2: Plan of church showing location of trenches. Approximate location of human remains is shaded red (NTS)

4. Methodology

The work followed the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Cooper 2014) 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 methodology for the work included attendance to monitor any groundworks which had the potential to damage buried archaeological remains. The programme of work during the watching brief visit consisted of the removal of the existing paving down to the required formation level.

The WSI stated that:

- 4.5 *Cuttings, area clearance and removal of tarmac will be the responsibility of the landscape contractor. Groundworks below this point will be under the supervision of the archaeologists, who will have full access to the site at points and times agreed with the landscape contractors, in order to excavate, reveal and if necessary lift any archaeological features discovered by the necessary works.*
- 4.6 *Any stratigraphy identified will be recorded by sketch or drawn sections (as appropriate), photographs and written descriptions of samples and deposits including any artefacts.*
- 4.7 *Archaeological deposits will be excavated and recorded using standard ULAS procedures.*
- 4.8 *Spoil will be monitored for artefacts.*
- 4.9 *Any human remains encountered will be initially left in situ, covered and protected, and only be removed in accordance with a Ministry of Justice licence and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations. The landowner and/or developer, the Planning Authority and the coroner will be informed immediately of their discovery.*
- 4.10 *Disarticulated remains are to be photographed in situ and bagged to context, before being stored in the church pending re-interment. The only exception to this would be if disarticulated remains are found in a charnel type context which might need more formal archaeological excavation and recording, or if the number of remains starts to look statistically significant in terms of justifying osteological analysis. Articulated remains will be cleaned and recorded in context and should ideally then be left in situ and only removed if absolutely necessary. They should then be bagged and recorded using skeleton numbers or similar, and returned to the church for reburial – unless context or number of remains justify removal for osteological assessment.*
- 4.11 *Where articulated remains, grave cuts or other archaeological features are encountered it is important that the groundworks stop (they are proceeding by hand in this area anyway) and the excavation will be done by the archaeologists until the archaeological deposits are cleared.*

6. Results

A watching brief visit was made on 14th April 2014 during the removal of the old paving adjacent to the east end of the church. The work took place on St Peter's Street and it was noted that the street level was significantly lower than the level of the churchyard. The old paving stones were bedded into a sand base above a compacted make-up layer consisting of mid-grey/brown sand containing stones, hard-core and occasional fragments of modern ceramics (eg old sewer pipes). This was levelled off 0.2m below the slab level. A modern cable trench was observed running north- south, in line with the road. The cable duct was encountered at approximately 0.2m below ground level. There was localised disturbance in the soil close to the pipe and also around the bases of former street furniture (a signpost and a bollard).

Occasional disarticulated fragments of human bone were encountered at the southern end of the excavation, close to the gated entrance to the church (Figure 2). These were within the compacted soils noted below the paving slabs and were evidently not *in situ*, having been disturbed during re-digging in the churchyard in antiquity and/or during previous modern interventions. A series of bones which appeared to be articulated were observed at 0.35m below previously ground level, directly adjacent to the path (Figure 6). These were within a mid grey brown clayey sand, which was encountered at 0.3m below ground level, beneath the modern make-up layers. However these bones were not investigated further as they were below formation level. They were therefore left *in situ* and covered over. The work did not reveal any further archaeological remains.

7. Conclusions

The work did not reveal any archaeological structures or deposits. However, a number of disarticulated human bones were encountered during the removal of the paving and a group of bones, possibly representing an undisturbed burial, was observed on the south side of the excavation, close to the entrance to St. Peter in the City. Disarticulated bones disturbed during the work were collected and stored within the church for re-burial at an appropriate time following the conclusion of the project.

8. Archive

The report will be submitted to Derbyshire HER and a record made on the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York, together with the uploaded report. Available at: <http://oasis.ac.uk/>

Following advice on negative interventions from Rachel Atherton of Derby Museums and Steve Baker Development Control Archaeologist at Derbyshire County Council (email dated 3rd February 2014), no archive will be deposited with Derby Museums.

9. Bibliography

Cooper, L. 2014 *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Attendance, Inspection and Recording (watching brief): St Peter's Cross, Derby*

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), (rev. 2010), *Code of Conduct*

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

10. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was carried out by Jennifer Browning of ULAS. Lynden Cooper 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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Figure 3: General view across excavated area, looking north



Figure 4: View across northern part of excavated area, looking north-west



Figure 5: Bench-mark on the east end of the church, showing relation to formation level



Figure 6: Bones *in situ*, adjacent to church entrance. These are below formation level. Section (East-facing) shows the overlying modern stratigraphy



Figure 7: Wider view of the location of *in situ* bones



Figure 8: Formation level on the north side of the church

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