

**An Archaeological Watching Brief to the Rear of Church House, The Green,  
Mountsorrel, Leicestershire (NGR SK 5834 1474).**

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**An Archaeological Watching Brief to the Rear of Church House, The Green,  
Mountsorrel, Leicestershire (NGR SK 5834 1474)**

**Gerwyn Richards**

***Summary***

*University of Leicester Archaeological Services was commissioned by Clegg Construction Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundwork at Church House, Mountsorrel, Leicestershire. The proposed development was within the historic core of the village and a wide variety of medieval sites are located nearby. In addition Saxon, Roman and Prehistoric sites are also recorded from the vicinity.*

*However, despite its promising location nothing of archaeological significance was observed during the course of the watching brief with the exception of a small fragment of undated rough cobbled surface.*

**1. Introduction**

University of Leicester Archaeological Services was commissioned by Clegg Construction Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundwork prior to building work on land to the rear of Church House, The Green, Mountsorrel, Leicestershire (SK 5834 1474). Outline planning permission had been granted to convert and extend Church House into a new library, learning and access centre (Planning Application 05/3786/2).

An examination of the Leicestershire and Rutland Sites and Monument Record (SMR) indicated that the site is located within the historical medieval town core of Mountsorrel. In addition, fifteen other medieval sites have been identified within the vicinity of the development (**MLE696, MLE697, MLE699, MLE701-706, MLE714, MLE717, MLE944, MLE6666, MLE8766 and MLE8769**). Various other archaeological sites have been recorded within 1km of the proposed development site. This includes thirteen prehistoric sites (**MLE716, MLE6046, MLE6283, MLE6558, MLE7411, MLE7421, MLE9122, MLE9474, and MLE10532-10535**), four Roman sites (**MLE710-712 and MLE7754**), one Anglo-Saxon site (**MLE6104**), eight post-medieval sites (**MLE698, MLE700, MLE707, MLE715, MLE945, MLE8770, MLE8847 and MLE9605**) and two undated sites (**MLE9604 and MLE10105**). Further, photographic evidence is recorded showing the seventeenth/eighteenth century Twiggs Cottage on the site.

As a result the Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council, as advisor to Charnwood Borough Council requested a strategy of archaeological watching brief. All groundwork was controlled and supervised by an archaeologist.

All archaeological work will adhere to the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* and

the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS). The watching brief followed the design specification for archaeological work 07-596 (Appendix).

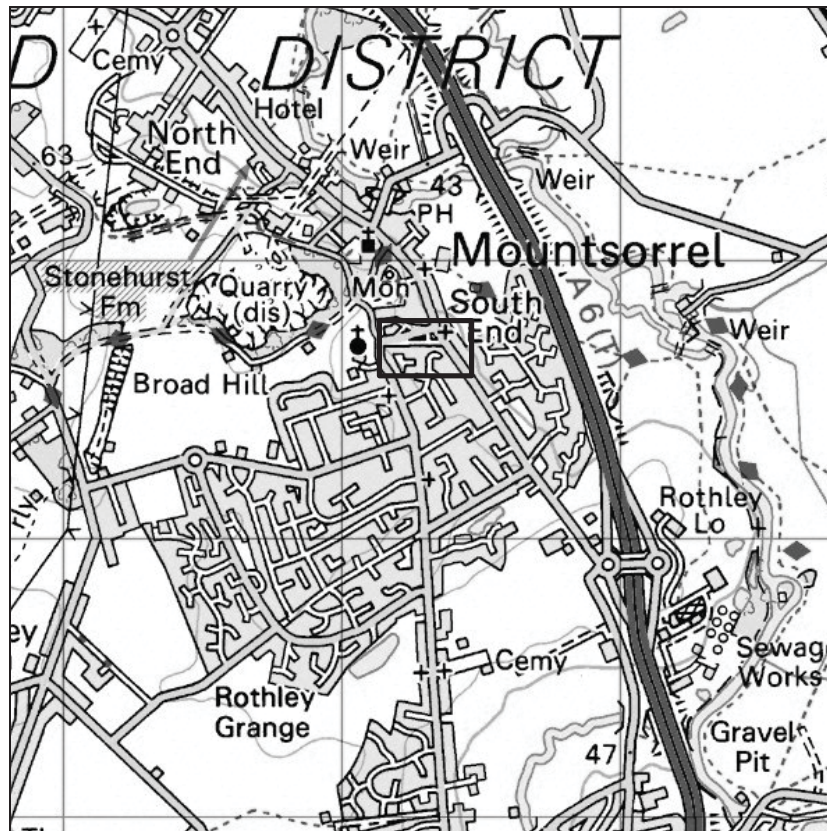


Figure 1. Site location Scale 1:50000

Reproduced from the Landranger 140 Leicester area 1:50000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 1996. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 10002186.

## 2. Methodology

Prior to redevelopment, according to the archaeological desk-based assessment (ULAS Report Number 2005-120) the area had been small overgrown yard, partially paved with concrete slabs. Considerable site clearance had taken place prior to the watching brief commencing. The boundary wall, again identified by the desk-based assessment as a potentially earlier feature had also been demolished. A JCB with ditching bucket supplied by the clients was used under continuous archaeological supervision. The watching brief was carried out on February 19<sup>th</sup> and February 20<sup>th</sup> 2007.

## 3. Results

Approximately 500mm at the eastern edge to 800mm at the western edge of overburden was removed revealing an horizon of weathered mudstone bedrock with occasional pockets of alluvial gravels. There was nothing of archaeological significance observed at this level. Adjacent to the southern most boundary a small area of roughly cobbled surface was exposed directly below the make up of the modern footpath. The majority of this surface was to be left *in-situ*, therefore,

recording was limited to a photographic record. No dating evidence was found in relation to the cobbles.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Despite its promising location, nothing of archaeological significance was observed during the watching brief. It appears that The Green has always been an open space and as a result no occupation has occurred, no evidence of Twiggs Cottage, the building recorded in the desk-based assessment was observed, suggesting that it has been completely concealed by Church House. It is possible that some remains may survive below the current footpath as Church House is set back from Leicester Road by approximately ten metres. The cobbled surface may relate to either to Twiggs Cottage or another unrecorded structure which fronted The Green and is now below the current road surface and car parking.

#### **5. Archive and Publication**

The site archive consists of

- 1 A2 permatrace sheet illustrating extent of the watching brief
- CD of Digital Images
- A4 Contact Sheet
- A4 Photo Index Sheet
- 2 A4 Watching Brief Sheets
- Unbound Copy of This Report

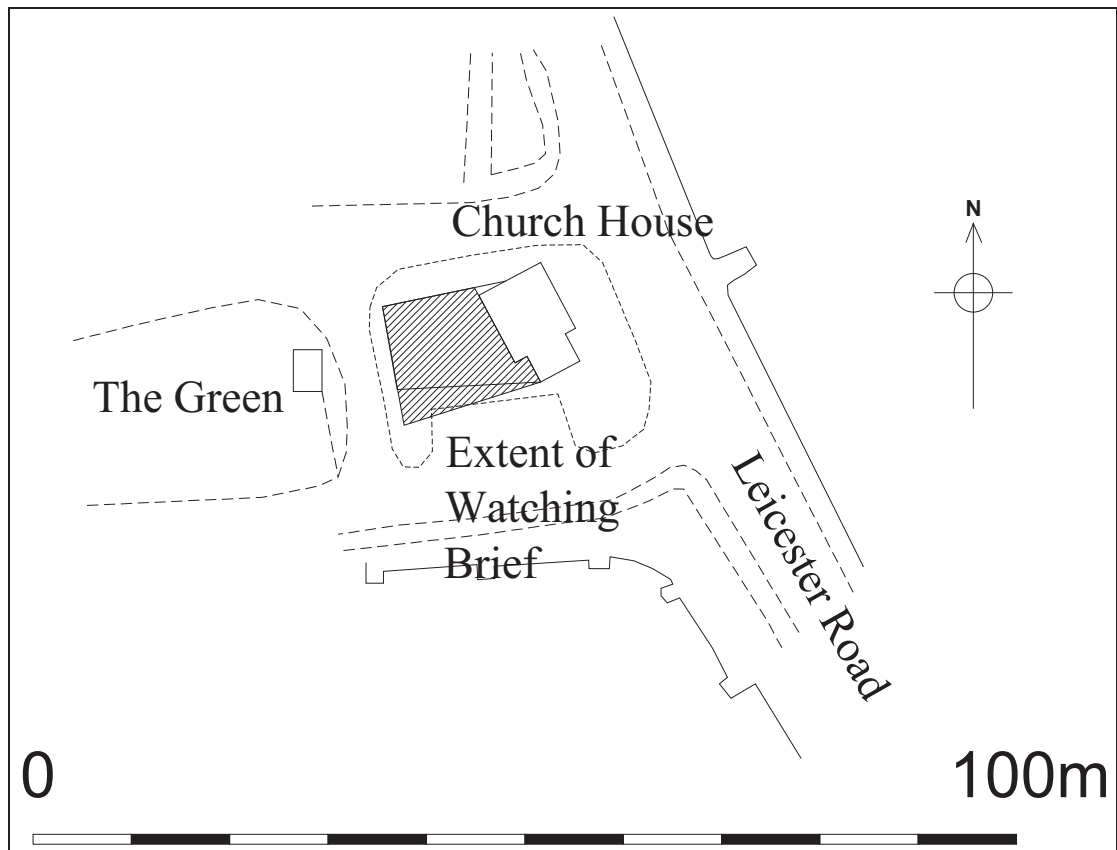
The archive will be held at Leicestershire County Council Accession Number X.A33.2007.

A version of the summary (above) will be published in *Transactions of Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course.

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**Figure 2** Location of Watching Brief.

**Colour Plates**



**Colour Plate 1** Work In Progress.



**Colour Plate 2** Cobbled Surface.

## Appendix

### UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

#### Design Specification for archaeological work

*Job title: Church House, The Green, Mountsorrel, Leicestershire*

*NGR: SK 5834 1474*

*Client: Clegg Construction Ltd*

*Planning Authority: Charnwood Borough Council*

*Planning application Nos. 05/3786/2*

#### 1 Definition and scope of the specification

1.1 In accordance with Planning Policy Guidelines 16 (PPG16, Archaeology and planning), para.30, this specification provides a written scheme for archaeological attendance, including control and supervision of ground works, as required by the Planning Authority, of any ground works on the site which may disturb areas of archaeological potential in connection with the construction of student accommodation. The proposed development site is located 12km north of Leicester in the village of Mountsorrel, in the district of Charnwood (SK 5834 1474, figs. 1 and 2). It consists of an area of 770 sq metres upon which Church House is situated. The proposed redevelopment consists of converting Church House into a new library, learning and access centre.

1.2 All archaeological work will adhere to the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* and the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland (LMARS)*.

#### 2 Background

##### *2.1 Requirement for archaeological work*

2.1.1 The archaeological watching brief involves observation of site strip and foundation and service trench excavations to identify any deposits of archaeological importance.

##### *2.2 Archaeological potential*

2.2.1 A desk-based assessment has been prepared for the application area (ULAS Report 2005-120). The Leicestershire Sites and Monuments Record indicate that the site for development is located within the historic medieval town core of Mountsorrel. In addition, fifteen other medieval sites have been identified within the vicinity of the development (**MLE696, MLE697, MLE699, MLE701-706, MLE714, MLE717, MLE944, MLE6666, MLE8766 and MLE8769**). Various other archaeological sites have been recorded within 1km of the proposed development site. This includes thirteen prehistoric sites (**MLE716, MLE6046, MLE6283, MLE6558, MLE7411, MLE7421, MLE9122, MLE9474, and MLE10532-10535**), four Roman sites (**MLE710-712 and MLE7754**), one Anglo-Saxon site (**MLE6104**), eight post-medieval sites (**MLE698, MLE700, MLE707, MLE715, MLE945, MLE8770, MLE8847 and MLE9605**) and two undated sites (**MLE9604 and MLE10105**).

#### 3 Aims

3.1 Through archaeological observation of existing overburden stripping and groundworks by the client's contractors:

1. To identify the presence/absence of any earlier building phases or archaeological deposits.
2. To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
3. To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
4. To produce an archive and report of any results.

#### **4 Methods**

4.1 The project will involve the control and supervision of overburden and other groundworks by an experienced professional archaeologist during the works specified above. During these ground works, if any archaeological deposits are seen to be present, the archaeologist will record areas of archaeological interest.

4.2 The archaeologist will co-operate at all times with the contractors on site to ensure the minimum interruption to the work.

4.3 Any archaeological deposits located will be hand cleaned and planned as appropriate. Samples of any archaeological deposits located will be hand excavated. Measured drawings of all archaeological features will be prepared at a scale of 1:20 and tied into an overall site plan of 1:100. All plans will be tied into the National Grid using an Electronic Distance Measurer (EDM) where appropriate.

4.4 Archaeological deposits will be excavated and recorded as appropriate to establishing the stratigraphic and chronological sequence of deposits, recognising and excavating structural evidence and recovering economic, artefactual and environmental evidence. Particular attention will be paid to the potential for buried palaeosols and waterlogged deposits in consultation with ULAS's environmental officer.

4.5 All excavated sections will be recorded and drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 scale, levelled and tied into the Ordnance Survey datum. Spot heights will be taken as appropriate.

4.5 Any human remains encountered will be initially left *in situ* and only be removed under a Home Office Licence and in compliance with relevant environmental health regulations. The developer, Leicestershire County Council, and the coroner will be informed immediately on their discovery.

4.6 Internal monitoring procedures will be undertaken including visits to the site from the project manager. These will ensure that professional standards are being maintained. Provision will be made for monitoring visits with representatives of the owners, Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services and Charnwood Borough Council.

4.7 In the event of significant archaeological remains being located during the watching brief there may be the need for contingency time and finance to be provided to ensure adequate recording is undertaken. On the discovery of potentially significant remains the archaeologist will inform the developer, the Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services and the planning authority. If the archaeological remains are identified to be of significance additional contingent archaeological works will be required.

#### **5 Recording Systems**



5.1 Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated or exposed will be entered onto prepared pro-forma recording sheets.

5.2 A site location plan based on the current Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map, (reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO) will be prepared. This will be supplemented by a plan at 1:200 (or 1:100), which will show the location of the areas investigated.

5.3 A record of the full extent in plan of all archaeological deposits encountered will be made on drawing film, related to the OS grid and at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20. Elevations and sections of individual layers of features should be drawn where possible. The OD height of all principal strata and features will be calculated and indicated on the appropriate plans.

5.4 An adequate photographic record of the investigations will be prepared. This will include black and white prints and colour transparencies illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. The photographic record will also include 'working shots' to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

5.5 This record will be compiled and fully checked during the course of the watching brief.

5.6 All site records and finds will be kept securely.

## ***6 Report and Archive***

6.1 A report on the watching brief will be provided following the groundworks.

6.2 Copies will be provided for the client, Sites and Monuments Record and planning Authority. The copyright of all original finished documents shall remain vested in ULAS and ULAS will be entitled as of right to publish any material in any form produced as a result of its investigations.

6.3 A full copy of the archive as defined in the 'Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage' (UKIC 1990), and Standards in the Museum care of archaeological collections (MGC 1992) and 'Guidelines for the preparation of site archives and assessments for all finds (other than fired clay objects) (Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700 1993) will be presented to Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services normally within six months of the completion of analysis. This archive will include all written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken.

## ***7 Publication***

7.1 A summary report will be submitted to a suitable regional or national archaeological journal within one year of completion of fieldwork. A full report will be submitted if the results are of significance.

## ***8 Timetable and Staffing***

8.1 The watching brief is scheduled to start during w.c 12.-02.2007. An experienced archaeologist will be present during this work.

## ***9 Health and Safety***

9.1 ULAS is covered by and adheres to the University of Leicester Statement of Safety Policy and uses the ULAS Health and Safety Manual (revised 2005) with appropriate risks

assessments for all archaeological work. A draft Health and Safety statement for this project is in the Appendix. The relevant Health and Safety Executive guidelines will be adhered to as appropriate.

### **10 Insurance**

10.1 All ULAS work is covered by the University of Leicester's Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance. The Public Liability Insurance is with St Pauls Travellers Policy No. UCPOP3651237 while the Professional Indemnity Insurance is with Lloyds Underwriters (50%) and Brit Insurances (50%) Policy No. FUNK3605.

### **11. Bibliography**

MAP 2, *The management of archaeological projects* 2nd edition English Heritage 1991

MGC 1992, *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museums and Galleries Commission)

RFG/FRG 1993, *Guidelines for the preparation of site archives* (Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700)

SMA 1993, *Selection, retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections. Guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (Society of Museum Archaeologists)

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## Appendix

### Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement

*Job title: Church House, The Green, Mountsorrel, Leicestershire*

*NGR: SK 5834 1474*

*Client: Clegg Construction Ltd*

*Planning Authority: Charnwood Borough Council*

*Planning application Nos. 05/3786/2*

#### *1 Nature of the work*

1.1 This statement is for an archaeological watching brief.

1.2 The work will involve observation of groundworks during daylight hours and recording of any underlying archaeological deposits revealed. Overall depth is likely to be c. 0.2-0.5m. This will involve the examination of the exposed surface with hand tools (shovels, trowels etc) and excavation of archaeological features. All work will adhere to the University of Leicester Health and Safety Policy and follow the guidance in the ULAS Health and Safety Manual (2001) together with the following relevant Health and Safety guidelines.

1.3 HSE Construction Information Sheet CS8 Safety in excavations.  
HSE Industry Advisory leaflet IND (G)143 (L): Getting to grips with manual handling.  
HSE Industry Advisory leaflet IND (G)145 (L): Watch Your back.  
CIRIA R97 Trenching practice.  
CIRIA TN95 Proprietary Trench Support Systems.  
HSE Guidance Note HS(G) 47 Avoiding danger to underground services. HSE Guidance Note GS7 Accidents to children on construction sites

1.4 The Health and Safety policy on site will be reassessed during the evaluation .

1.5 All work will adhere to the contractors' health and safety policy.

#### **2 Risks Assessment**

##### *2.1 Working within a building site*

Precautions. No work will be undertaken beneath section faces. Loose spoil heaps will not be walked on. Protective footwear will be worn at all times. Hard hats will be worn at all times. A member of staff qualified in First Aid will be present at all times. First aid kit, vehicle and mobile phone to be kept on site in case of emergency.

##### *2.2 Working with plant.*

Precautions. Hard hats, protective footwear and hazard jackets will be worn at all times. No examination of the area of stripping will take place until machines have vacated area. Observation of machines will be maintained during hand excavation. Liaison will be maintained with the contractors to ensure programme of machine movement is understood.

##### *2.3 Working within areas prone to waterlogging.*

Protective clothing will be worn at all times and precautions taken to prevent contact with stagnant water which may carry Wile's disease or similar.

#### *2.4 Working with chemicals.*

If chemicals are used to conserve or help lift archaeological material these will only be used by qualified personnel with protective clothing (i.e a trained conservator) and will be removed from site immediately after use.

#### *2.5 Other risks*

Precautions. If there is any suspicion of unforeseen hazards being encountered e.g chemical contaminants, unexploded bombs, hazardous gases work will cease immediately. The client and relevant public authorities will be informed immediately.

2.9 No other constraints are recognised over the nature of the soil, water, type of excavation, proximity of structures, sources of vibration and contamination.

Patrick Clay

7.8.2006