



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS CHURCH,

MAIN STREET, COSBY,

LEICESTERSHIRE

NGR SP 5479 9486

*On behalf of
The PCC, St Michaels and All Angels' Church*

MAY 2018

REPORT FOR The Incumbent and Church Wardens
St Michael and All Angels' Church
Main Street,
Cosby,
Leicestershire,
LE9 1UW.

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SUMMARY

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief during the course of excavations for a drainage and mains water supply across the southern area of the churchyard of St Michael and All Angels Church, Cosby, Leicestershire (NGR SU 41692 85717). Two articulated burials were encountered during the excavation of the service trench; in order to avoid disturbing any more graves, the new service trench was redirected to follow the path of earlier services in the area.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

St Michael and All Angels Church is located in the village of Cosby, Leicestershire (NGR SU 41692 85717). The development site lies at approximately 74.5 m OD. The geology is Mercia Mudstone Group bedrock with superficial deposits of alluvium deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel from the Quaternary Period (British Geological Survey).

1.2 Planning Background

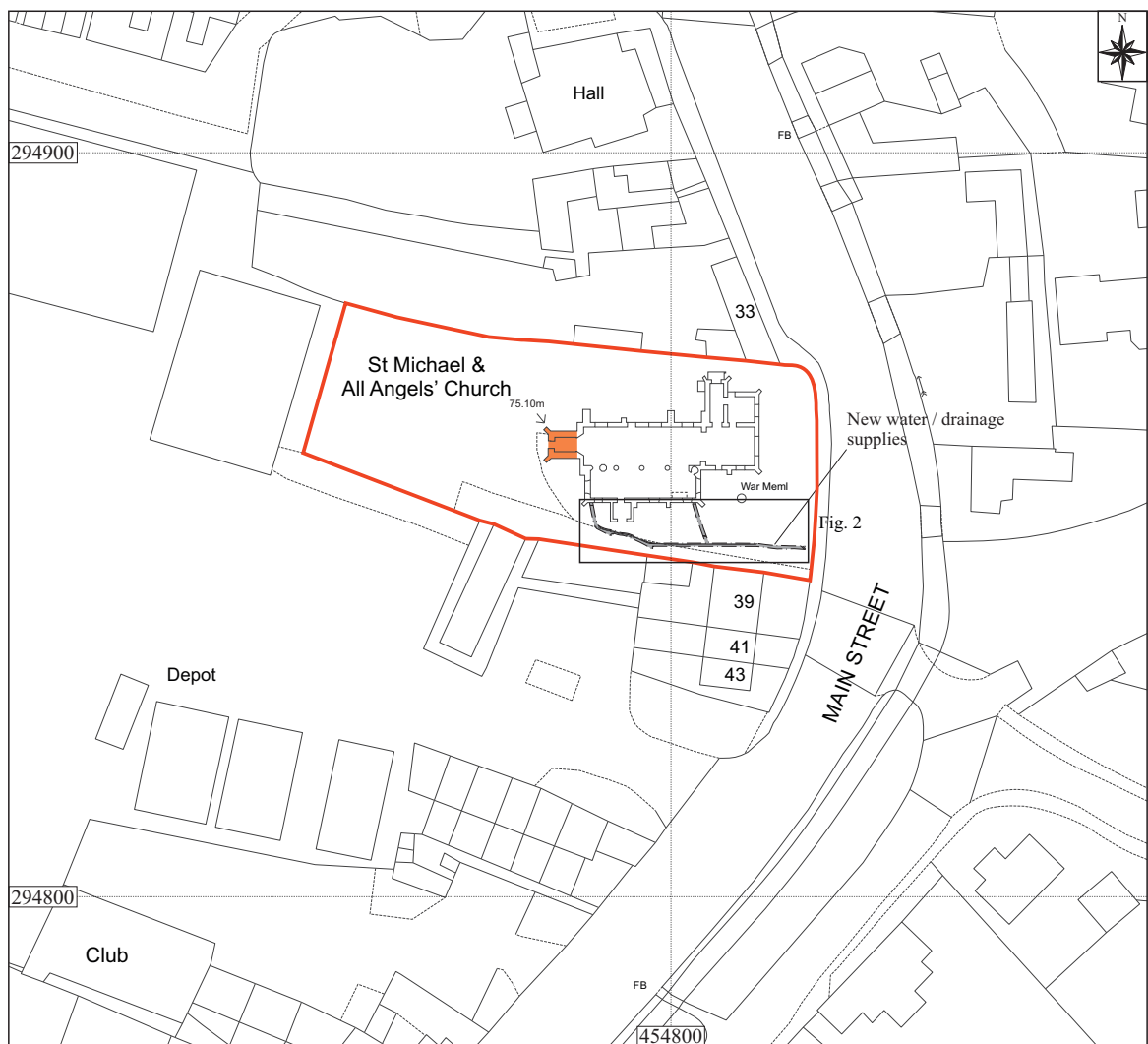
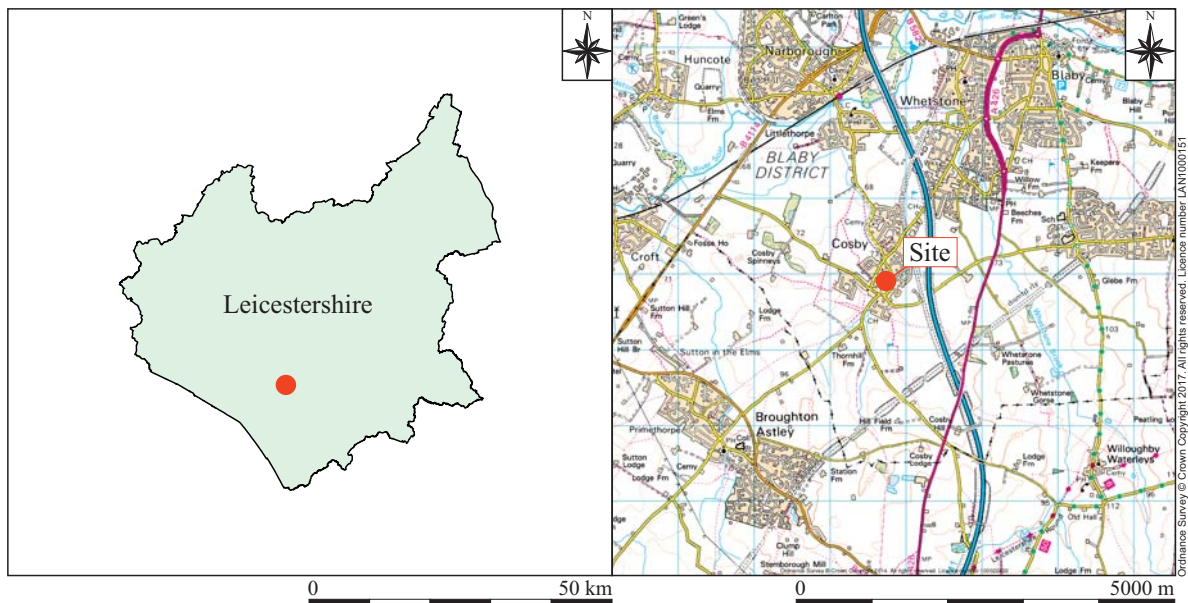
A faculty was granted by the Consistory Court of the Diocese of Leicester authorising works at The Church of St Michael and All Angels in the Parish of Cosby Leicestershire. The works included the excavations for mains water supply and drainage across the churchyard.

Conditions were attached to the faculty stating that

No works shall take place until the PCC, after consultation with the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the PCC and approved by the DAC.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The church is of 11th, 13th, 14th, 15th century build restored in 1907. The 14th century west tower; 3 stages, has chamfered plinth with moulded band, 2 string courses, coved eaves with spouts and crenellated parapet. 2 diagonal western buttresses and single south eastern buttress, with set offs. First stage has to west a restored shouldered doorway with weather-stripped door and above it, a late C14 double lancet with panel tracery and hood mould. Second stage has to north and south, a quatrefoil light. Third stage has on each side a restored cusped double lancet bell opening with hood moulds and stops. Above these, to north, south and west, a clock. Set back octagonal spire has 2 tiers of lucarnes on alternate faces, all with crocketed gables, the lower tier having double lancets. Above, crocketed finial and weathercock.



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Key Site boundary Monitored area Test pit area (2014)

Figure 1: Site location

An archaeological evaluation was carried out in the west tower (JMHS 2014). The excavations identified a mortar layer which may have been laid down after the tower was completed in the 14th Century. Later deposits were identified as made ground or levelling deposits and contained 16th and 17th century bricks.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation were to record any archaeological remains impacted on by the groundworks, and in particular to record and excavate any burials encountered during the groundworks.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the PCC and approved by the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014).

3.2 Methodology

A service trench was excavated in the southern side of the churchyard of St. Michael and All Angels, Cosby (Fig.2). The trench was excavated from the south-west corner of the church, running parallel with the southern edge of the building, from west to east. Halfway along the trench a further trench branched off from this trench in a SSE to NNW direction to meet the southern wall of the church.

An experienced archaeologist was present throughout the excavations. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was also produced.

The resultant spoil from the works was visually scanned, especially for finds relating to disarticulated human bones. Disarticulated human remains were collected and were reburied where they were found.

The direction of the service trench was changed twice during groundworks, due to the presence of two burials (Fig. 2). In order to avoid disturbing other graves, the new service trench was redirected to follow the path of earlier services in the area.

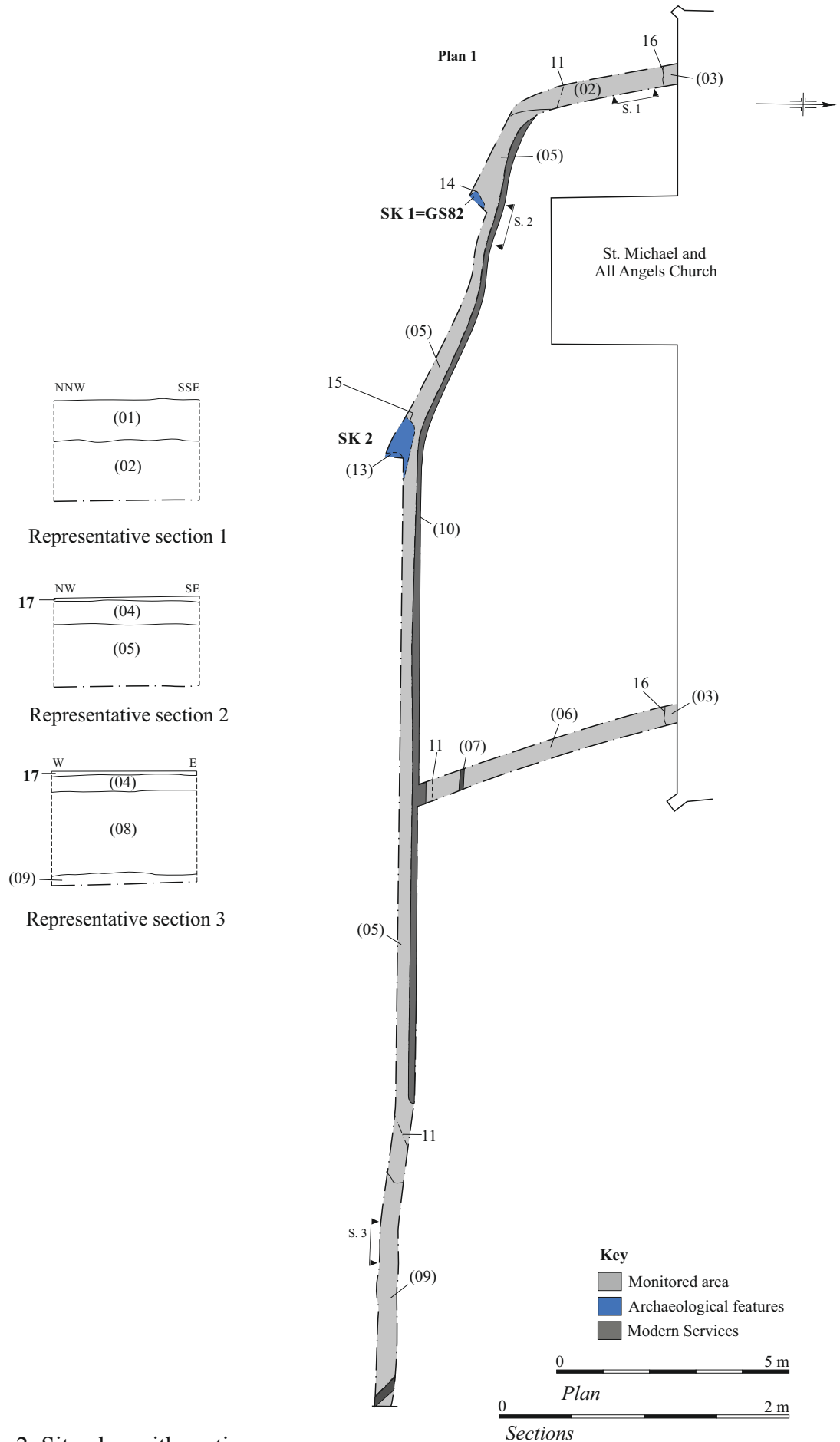


Figure 2: Site plan with sections

4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts, numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material, while numbers in bold indicate structural features.

4.1 Fieldwork

The lowest layer uncovered during the excavation was (09), a dark yellow-brownish clay sandy deposit (Fig. 2, Plate 4); it was only revealed in the East end of the service trench, and identified as the underlying natural geology.

The natural deposit was overlain by churchyard soils (02)=(06)=(08), a mid-brown, clayey sandy loam with moderate stone inclusions (Fig.2, Plates 1-2). This deposit, extending across the site, had a thickness varying between 0.4 and 0.55m and contained a significant amount of charnel, as well as rare fragments of animal bone and ceramic building material.



Plate 1. Section 03, facing North



Plate 2. Section 03, facing South

Cut 16, a linear trench measuring *ca.* 0.4m in width and extending along the church's external walls, was cut to a depth of 0.75m into graveyard soils (02)=(06)=(08), and was filled with (03), a 0.65m thick dark brown sandy clay deposit with medium to large stone inclusions. This feature was identified as the church's perimetric drainage.

Cut into graveyard soils (02)=(06)=(08), at a depth of 0.65m below the current ground level, was grave cut 14, the burial for SK1. The grave cut was not clearly detected during the excavations, a common occurrence in long-established graveyards; however, the presence of an intact cranium (Plate 3) facing east, as well as the possible association of the remains with the *in situ* gravestone 82 (GS82, Fig. 2 and Plate 5) and based on their respective positions, suggested the burial could be undisturbed. SK1 grave's fill (12) was a soft, light brown clayey silt deposit.

A second grave 15 was cut into graveyard soils (02)=(06)=(08). The grave cut was not clearly visible; its proposed extent was based on the position of the revealed human remains. SK2 was only partially uncovered; the left femur, patella and proximal tibia were visible. The remains lay in grave fill (13), a soft light brown clayey silt deposit, at a depth of 0.7m below the current ground level.

The burials were possibly marginally disturbed by modern service trench 11 (Fig. 2), a linear trench measuring over 22m in length, over 0.45m in width, and 0.4m in depth. The trench was excavated in order to lay a ceramic pipe, and backfilled with (05), a firm, mid-brown sandy clay deposit. The possible disturbance was not further investigated in order to minimise the impact on the burials.

Two additional, modern service trenches were also recovered in the western end of the excavated area.

All of the service trenches were sealed by topsoil (01), a dark brown silty sand deposit, measuring 0.3m in thickness, and containing a few fragments of 20th century pottery.

The latest intervention in the churchyard consisted of the current, stone-paved pathway **17**, laid on top of made ground (04), a 0.18m thick deposit of soft sandy silt deposit.



Plate 3. SK1 cranium



Plate 4. SK2

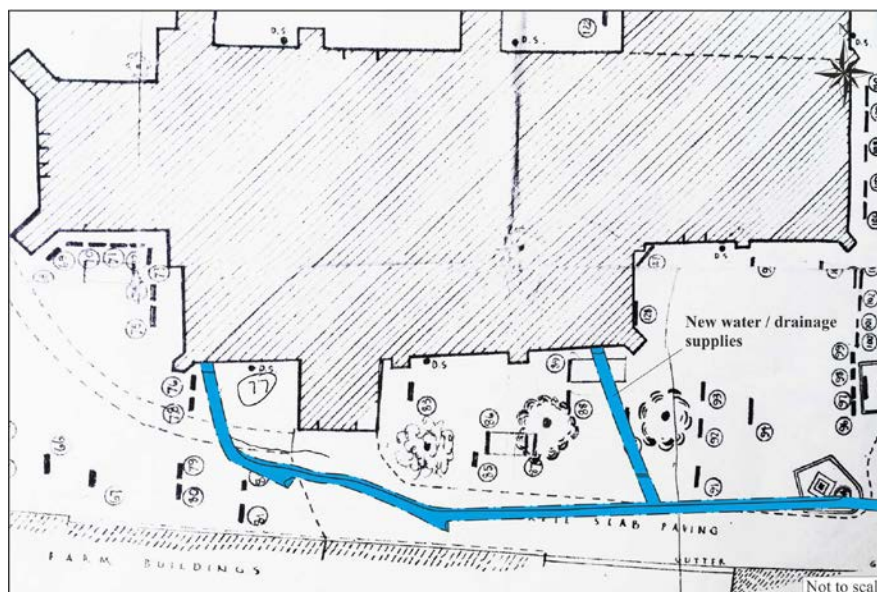


Plate 5. Gravestones and excavated trenches

4.2 Reliability of Results

The watching brief was undertaken in good weather conditions and the burials were clearly identifiable when encountered. The reliability of the results is considered to be good.

5 FINDS

An extremely limited assemblage of modern finds were recorded during the groundworks, but not collected. A few sherds of modern pottery were noted in topsoil (01), while churchyard soils (02)=(06)=(08) yielded a very small quantity of animal bone and ceramic building material fragments.

6 DISCUSSION

The archaeological watching brief positively identified the presence of one articulated although possibly disturbed, unmarked burial (SK2). A second, possibly undisturbed grave was also revealed, represented by the cranium of SK2. The articulation of the latter individual was not investigated in order to reduce the disturbance of the burial; however, the position and orientation of the cranium, paired with the possible association of the remains with the *in situ* gravestone 82, suggest the inhumation was undisturbed. The burials were revealed at a depth of *ca.* 0.65m below the current ground level.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper record

Project Brief

Written scheme of investigation

The project report

The primary site record

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Leicestershire County Council Museum with the accession number X.A135.2016.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

John Moore Heritage Services (2014) *An Archaeological Evaluation at St Michael and All Angels Church, Main Street, Cosby, Leicestershire*. Unpublished document: JMHS

John Moore Heritage Services (2018). *Church of St Michael and All Angels, Cosby, Leicestershire. Archaeological Watching Brief. Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpublished document: JMHS

APPENDIX 1: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Archaeological watching brief at St Michael and All Angels Church, Cosby, Leicestershire.	
Short description	John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief during the course of excavations for a main drainage and water supply across the southern churchyard of St Michael and All Angels Church, Cosby, Leicestershire (NGR SU 41692 85717). Two articulated burials were encountered during the excavation of the service trench; in order to avoid disturbing any more graves, the new service trench was redirected to follow the path of earlier services in the area.	
Project dates	20 th March- April 2018	
Project type	Recording project – watching brief	
Previous work	Yes	
Future work	Not known	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location St Michael and All Angels Church Main Street, Cosby, Leicestershire		
Study area	406 square metres	
Site co-ordinates	NGR SU 41692 85717	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS)	
Project Brief originator	Diocesan Archaeological Advisor	
Project Design (WSI)	JMHS	
Project Manager	John Moore	
Project Supervisor	Carlos Fernández González	
MONUMENT TYPE	Grave	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	N/A	N/A
Paper	Leicestershire County Council Museum	Report, Primary Records, Photos
Digital	ADS	Report, Primary Records, Photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Fernández González, Carlos 2018 Archaeological watching brief at St Michael and All Angels Church, Cosby, Leicestershire.		