

Site name: Franciscan Way

Site ref: IAS 5003 HER ref: IPS 720 CIMS Accession No: IPSMG: R.2009.70

NGR: TM16124424 Extent (all phases): 1,996 sq m

Circumstances of excavation

The site, which lay on the north side of the junction between Franciscan Way and Wolsey Street, had been occupied by a redundant garage and car showroom.

Outline planning consent (IP/0/34/88) to redevelop the site was granted in 1988 subject to a Section 52 Agreement providing for an archaeological record to be made of archaeological deposits which would otherwise be damaged or destroyed. Excavation of c.1400m² took place in 1990.

The development was never started and the site changed hands twice after the 1990 excavation with owners submitting new schemes for planning permission (IP/00/1093/FP and IP/04/00835/FUL). Each scheme was larger than the previous one and each additional area was excavated by the Suffolk Archaeological Unit: 309sq m in 2002 (Sommers 2004) and 176 sq m in 2006 (archive only). The results of these two additional areas technically fall outside the remit of this project but they have been included as they have a direct bearing on the interpretation of the 1990 work.

Site Constraints

The excavations were restricted to the footprints of the proposed developments. Following completion of the 1990 excavation, the site was not backfilled and the edges were sheet piled causing some damage to unexcavated deposits along the western boundary.

The site lies just above the normal flood limit of the River Gipping (now piped underground) only 50m to the west, but remains vulnerable to flood tides. Deeper features became waterlogged during excavation, especially towards the south-west. The natural sands and gravels sloped from c.2.4m OD in the north-east to c.1.4m OD in the west. The north-south contours bend eastward in the south-west of the site, indicating either a relict meander of the Gipping or a small stream running roughly along the line of Wolsey Street/Cutler Street to the south.

Funding bodies

All the excavations were carried out by the Suffolk Archaeological Unit.

The 1990 excavation was funded by the developers, The Churchmanor Estates Company PLC. The 2002 excavation was funded by Jedcon Estates. The March 2006 excavation was funded by Swift Develeopments Ltd which went into liquidation without satisfying its planning obligations to ensure an archive and report

Stratigraphic sequence (by period)

Pre Middle Saxon

Two sherds of prehistoric pottery, six Romano-British and four Early Middle Saxon sherds were found, residual in later contexts.

Middle Saxon: c.700-850 (MS)

Five boundary features, four wells and 16 pits can be assigned to this period but no structures. A sequence of at least four phases of activity underlay the ELS road (0113) and was associated with small quantities of Ipswich ware and four sceattas deposited

c.740-760 (two in ditch 0492 below, one (0004/5003N) in MS pit 0422 and one (0005/5003N) residual in and EMED pit).

Phase 1 (c.700-740)

Well 0630

The well comprised a pit c.1.7 m in diameter with an intact timber lining comprising a hollowed out oak trunk (0675). The tree rings spanned the period AD 585-688 (Hillam 1989).

Phase 2 (c.740-760)

Ditch 0492

This north-south ditch cut the phase 1 well (0630) and was up to 2m wide and 80cm deep. It produced 12 sherds of Ipswich ware (and three Thetford ware, rejected as contamination) with two sceattas (0002/5003N, 0003/5003N), deposited c.740-760. By the end of its life, the ditch had accumulated 700gm of iron slag within its fill (see Iron working below).

Phase 3 c.760-800

Ditch 0337 (also 0495, 0601)

This ditch, 90cm wide and 20-30cm deep, cut the larger phase 2 ditch (0492), and contained four Ipswich ware sherds.

The original plan shows it terminating in a butt end (0601) just short of the south limit of excavation but the drawn section appears to show it cutting ditch 0492 just before it is cut by EMED pit 0573.

Well 0664

This well had a pit 1.5m in diameter and 1.35m deep, with a central shaft, lined with a reused barrel, c. 70cm in diameter, comprising 19 oak staves (0689-0707).

Two Ipswich ware sherds were recovered from the lower shaft (0685) and the timber was dated after AD 754 (Hillam, 1989). Iron slag was only recovered from the central well shaft.

Phase 4 (c.800-850)

Boundary 0214

This boundary ran north-south, cutting ditch 0337, and terminating about 12m from the southern limit of excavation. It was much smaller than 0337 being only 30-40cm wide and up to 20cm deep. There was no associated pottery.

Unphased Middle Saxon Features

Ditch 0854

This ditch, 80cm wide and 30cm deep, with an orange-brown sandy fill, was traced for over 21m (numbered 2007, at its west end). Its profile suggests the base of a truncated ditch more similar to the lower profile of ditch 0492 suggesting that it is also phase 2. It was cut by ELS pit 0947.

Ditch 0928

This ditch, 90cm wide and over 40cm deep, was traced for over 14m (numbered 3196, at its west end). No pottery was recovered, but it was cut by a (probable) ELS pit (0927) and EMED pit 0930. A sandy fill indicates that it was the base of a truncated ditch, similar to 0854 and probably phase 2.

Well 0746

This well had a pit 1.4m diameter and 1.4m deep with a central shaft, 80cm in diameter, lined with a stave barrel (0803), which was removed by mechanical excavator. The only pottery came from the top 10-15cm (0746) and comprised 10 Ipswich sherds and one Thetford ware sherd. The latter can be discounted as later filling of the depression over the shaft. The macrobotanical remains retrieved (Fryer and Murphy 1993) included seeds and fruit of open grassland species.

Well 0809

This well shaft, 1.4m in diameter and 1.4m deep, was lined with a stave barrel (1007). There were 6 sherds of Ipswich ware associated.

Pits

Phasing of the pits is not possible, apart from 0543 which cuts the phase 3 boundary 0337 and is, therefore, phase 4, and 0799, which is cut by 0337 and, therefore, phase 1 or 2.

However, pit 0543 is part of a distinct line of pits running north-south (0139, 0482, 0468, 0452, 0543) implying that this whole line is phase 4. It is also interesting that this line of pits appears to continue southward with ELS pits (0552, 0856, 0644, 0286) implying a continuity of 9th century activity, which predates the construction of roadway 0113 at the end of the ELS period.

The pits in this line are also characterised by significant quantities of iron waste.

Middle Saxon Iron Working

Over 11kg of iron slag was recovered from Middle Saxon contexts, mainly in phase 4, indicating the start of an industry which took off in the following ELS period. The Ancient Monuments Laboratory assessment report lists only 0.005kg of iron slag from Middle Saxon contexts (Starley 1995), but this revised total suggests that its importance during the Middle Saxon period was underestimated.

The assessment indicates that both smithing and smelting were being undertaken on the site, and that activity increased to a peak in phase 4.

Middle Saxon features lying to the west of ditch 0492 either have no residues in their fills, or only small amounts.

Discussion

The low elevation of the site in relation to the flood plain of the River Orwell and the Gipping, just 50m west of the site would have made it liable to occasional flooding in the absence of flood defences.

Only well 0630 can be assigned to phase 1. In phase 2 the site was divided by the substantial north-south ditch (0492). The two ditches (0854 and 0928) are probably also phase 2 forming a triangular enclosure with 0492 and associated with at least one of the three MS wells (0664). The southern enclosure ditch (0854) runs in a NW/SE orientation following the c.2m OD contour which may reflect the expected flood line.

Ditch 0492 was replaced in phase 3 by the curving north-south ditch 0337, which in phase 4, was replaced with a north-south palisade fence (0214).

The lack of any evidence of structures and the low density of pits suggests that it was peripheral to domestic occupation at this period. The whole site produced only 828 sherds of Ipswich ware.

Most of the 19 pits lay on the higher ground, on the eastern half of the site, with only 5 in the western half.

It would seem likely that the west half of the site was meadow throughout the period with the wells providing drinking water for stock. The eastern half may have formed the rear of tenements to the east, where iron production was a significant activity.

Early Late Saxon: c.850-900/925 (ELS)

The whole site was redeveloped by the end of this relatively short period with a major ditch and roadway, four structures and 81 pits, which in some instances show three phases of inter-cutting.

Ditch 3086/3145

A substantial north-south ditch (3086) ran along the western boundary of the site. Its western edge lay outside the area of excavation but it must have exceeded 3.5m wide. The central 'V-shaped' fill of this ditch (3145) represents either a recut of the ditch or its final filling.

Unfortunately, it was not related stratigraphically to any other features (other than being cut by LMED context 3085) and as only sample sections were excavated, the only pottery recovered was one sherd of Ipswich ware from 3086 and two sherds of Thetford ware from 3145.

Road 0113/0671

This substantial road, metalled with gravel set in clay, ran north-south down the centre of the site. It survived best at the north, where it was 8m wide, with a second area found at the extreme south end (0671). The pottery associated was 16 sherds of Ipswich ware and 37 sherds of Thetford ware. The only features found under the metalled surface were the line of Middle Saxon pits (0139, 0482, 0468, 0452). Further south, where the metalled surface did not survive, there were also ELS pits (0537, 0789) implying that the road post-dated them and was a later phase of the ELS period.

The section of pit 0468 shows two levels of cobbles with one over its top fill and a second which had sunk 20cm into its fill, implying at least two phases of metalling.

Building 0038

This shallow sunken-featured building lay on the eastern edge of the site. It was 6.3m long and over 1m wide (most of the structure lay east of the excavated area). Dating relies on 16 sherds of Thetford ware.

The pit was 20cm deep with remnants of a clay floor (0107), overlying a foundation trench (0125/0148) along the west side of the building. This trench was 40cm wide and 20-30cm deep, with a line of post holes within in it (0140, 0108, 0191, 0103, 0104, 0105, 0147). There were also the remnants of a foundation slot (0164/0165) along the south side and a large posthole (0163) in the south-east corner.

Building 0166

A narrow slice of a sunken-featured building survived, heavily truncated both north and south by EMED pits and LMED graves. The surviving portion was 3m wide by 30cm deep, flat-bottomed with a posthole (0204) surviving on the base on the east side. It was parallel to and 2.6m west of building 0038. Dating relies on 16 Thetford ware sherds and one Ipswich ware sherd.

Building 1041

This surface laid building, at the north end of the site, was 3m wide by 3.6m long, and comprised post holes 0458, 0462, 0464, 0466, 0496, 0497, 0725, 0729, 0730, 0742, 0801. It was possibly open-fronted. The only associated pottery was 1 Ipswich ware sherd from 0725 and 3 Thetford ware from 0729.

As postholes 0496 and 0497 were sealed under the metalled road surface, the building is ELS phase 1, predating the construction of the roadway.

Building 1042

This surface laid building, at the north end of the site, was 4m long by over 2m wide, and comprised post holes *0288, 0289, 0290, 0401, 0441, 0443, 0444, 0457, 0465, 0804, 0805* and hearth *0404*. The only pottery was 1 Ipswich ware sherd from *0401* and 1 Ipswich ware and 1 Thetford ware from *0404*. As posthole *0457* and hearth *0404* cut post hole *0458*, part of building *1041*, it is ELS phase 2, and contemporary with the roadway *0113*. Hearth *0404* was bowl-shaped, 50cm in diameter and 10cm deep and was full of iron slag and charcoal. It was evidently a smithing hearth.

Pits

Some 81 pits belong to this period. This may be an over-estimate as it includes all those pits with Thetford ware alone (and no stratigraphic evidence of later date) as well as those with Ipswich ware. However, one of these pits (*2008*), with 32 sherds of Thetford ware only, also contained a penny of Edmund (855-70) lending confidence to the dating. The pits are distributed across the whole site with a concentration just east of road *0113* at the south end of the site.

All the pits in the low-lying south-west corner of the site showed evidence of waterlogged lower fills, with organic deposits and, in one case, peat. Others have water-lain sands and gravels implying that they had been open during flooding from the nearby river Gipping. Some, also have layers of charcoal. The most intriguing of the pits were two linear, rectangular, shallow, trench-like pits at right angles to each other (*2008, 2016*). *2016* was 1m wide by 6.9m long and *2008* was over 4.0m long (truncated at its north end) by 1.3m wide. They were both flat-bottomed, 20cm deep and with vertical sides. The primary fill was grey silt and gravel with much charcoal and the secondary fill was yellow sand and grey silt. The ELS date was confirmed by a penny (*2508/5003Cu*) of Edmund (855-70) from *2008*.

The Early Late Saxon Iron Working Industry

The late ninth century is marked by a spectacular growth in the iron industry. Nearly 180kg of slag was recovered (94kg from ELS and 85kg from LS features), mainly from pits on the east side of the street and from the road surface itself (29kg). There is evidence for both smelting and smithing (Starley 1995 and Cowgill 2004).

At least one certain furnace base was recorded (*0731*), on the eastern edge of the road, just south of the centre of the site. It appears to be a pit with a vitrified clay 'bowl-shaped' feature in its upper levels. Adjacent pits *0503* and *0505* have alternate layers of burnt sand and charcoal. Pit *0503* also produced an antler mould (*0512, 0041/5003B*) for casting base metal (tin and lead) disc brooches.

Building *1042*, at the north of the site and east of road *0113*, was associated with a hearth (*0404*) with large amounts of hammerscale indicating iron smithing (Starley 1995).

A second possible furnace base (*0438*) lay on the north side of building *1042* but, as it was sealed by yard *0234*, which respects this building, it is more likely to be associated with the phase 1 building (*1041*). *0438* was an oval pit, c.3m long by 1.8m wide, flat-bottomed and 35cm deep, filled with dark grey clay with charcoal and a smaller 'bowl' of silty sand on its upper levels. A stake hole (*0440*) was recorded at the west end.

Discussion

Although the dating evidence for the construction of the large ditch *3085/3145* is inadequate, there is no reason to doubt that it is a town defence, contemporary with the road (*0113*), which is likely to be the intra-mural street, and is the same ditch as that excavated at Elm Street (IAS3902) and School Street (IAS 4801), where more comprehensive dating evidence was found.

There is evidence that an intra-mural street ran around the whole circuit of the early 10th century town defences. The roadway found on the Franciscan Way site lines up with Curriers Lane and Blackhorse Lane further to the north, which are also interpreted as intramural streets of the rampart further north.

It is likely that the defences were not built until the end of the ELS period or early in the MLS period (c.885/925) and an unknown proportion of the ELS settlement features must predate the redevelopment. These earlier ELS features might relate to the surviving MS phase 4 landscape.

The north-south line of MS pits (0139/0482/0468/0452/0543) appears to continue southward with ELS pits (0552/0856/0644/0286) which must imply that the latter predate roadway 0113 and relate to boundary 0214. This implies that the redevelopment of this area of town was most likely later in the ELS period (c.885).

After the 'redevelopment', occupation was virtually limited to the land east of the roadway and included at least one building (1042).

Both post hole structures at the north end of the site (1041 and 1042) lie adjacent to and are probably associated with the metal working industry both in phase 1 and phase 2. Neither look like substantial structures and are most likely iron smithies.

The large quantity of iron slag (29kg) recovered from the surface of the roadway (0113), implies that it was used for road surfacing and, although there was a ready supply on site, some may have been imported from other sites in the town.

Middle Late Saxon: c.900/925-1000 (MLS)

Two wells (0009 and 0236) and 22 pits belong to this period. Although there do not appear to be any buildings of this date, it is quite possible that the smithy building (1042), which appears to have been constructed in the ELS period, continued in use during at least the early MLS period. This is supported by the fact that the MLS yard (0234) appears to respect this structure.

Roadway 0113

The roadway continued in use throughout this period. Layer 0114, removed from over the metallated surface, contained 24 Ipswich ware sherds, 425 Thetford ware and 6 Early Medieval wares.

Yard 0234

Adjacent to the east side of road 0113, at the north end of the site, was an area of metallated surface, presumably a yard, which was traced up to 6m back from the street edge. It had sunk into the top of MLS pit 0159 but was cut by MLS pit 0335.

Pits

Pits of this period were concentrated east of the central roadway (0113), with seven lying in the north-east quadrant of the site (0159, 0219, 0326, 0375, 0390, 0740, 0831), together with well 0236, and nine in the south-east quadrant (0026, 0036, 0064, 0070, 0087, 0151, 0392, 0472, 0883), together with well 0009.

Only five pits were located west of the roadway (0871, 0973, 0980, 1005, 1006).

Metal Working

88kg of iron slag was recovered from MLS pits almost exclusively from east of roadway 0113 (only pit 0973, west of the roadway, produced over 1kg of slag).

Discussion

There appears to be a reduction of activity compared with the preceding ELS period. However, the metal working industry continued as a major activity.

The absence of pits on the west end of the site implies that it was covered by the bank associated with the town ditch, of which no other evidence survives.

Early Medieval: c.1000-1200 (EMED)

At least three phases can be observed in this period from the relationship of the boundaries to pits.

Roadway 0113

The roadway continued in use and was bordered on its east side by two north-south parallel boundaries, separating the road from the tenement east of it.

Boundaries 0380/0858 and 0227/0377.

The western boundary (0380/0858) was 'U'-shaped, 30-50cm wide and 10-15cm deep. The eastern boundary (0227/0377) was 'U'-shaped, 30-70cm wide and 10-45cm deep. These boundaries are either small ditches or trenches for palisade-type fences, although no post holes or post impression were recorded in either.

The pottery from 0858 was 2 sherds of Ipswich ware and 46 of Thetford ware, implying an ELS date, but it clearly cuts MLS pit 0883 and ELS pit 0890, and its relationship to 0227, parallel to it, and its northern counterpart (EMED 0380) confirms its EMED date. 0227 cuts EMED pit 0937 and is cut by EMED pit 0273 (which also cuts fence 0858). 0377 cuts EMED pit 0133 and 0380 cuts EMED pit 0115.

The evidence suggests that both boundaries are phase 2 and that there was a phase before and after them without a boundary alongside the road. It is impossible to determine which boundary replaced the other, but they are unlikely to have been contemporary.

It appears on the excavation plan that both boundary lines share a gap in them, just south of midway, providing an entrance from the road, but the context sheets note that 0502 (south end of 0380) was partly machined away, and a dotted line is shown running south towards 0227. However, the north end of 0858 is a clear butt end and an entrance to the north is highly likely of uncertain width. A small gap of 1m is certainly found between 0227 and 0377, some 17m north of the gap suggested for 0380/0858. This further argues against the two boundaries being contemporary.

Pits

On the tenement, east of the roadway, there were 52 pits but no structures and 26 pits west of the roadway.

A rectangular pit (0369), in the north-east corner of the site was over 7m long, 3.4m wide and 30cm deep, with sloping sides and a flat base. It had a uniform loam filling and no trace of any lining. This is very similar to the large rectangular pits 0005 (LMED) and 0037 (LMT) further south but with no evidence of lining it is difficult to assign any function

Two ovens were found in the western half of the site.

Oven 2010

This comprised an oval oven pit, 2.75m in diameter and 20cm deep with a flat base and a tear drop shaped stoke hole (2024) on the north side. The lower fill of the oven and stoke hole was 5cm of heat-reddened silt with charcoal and numerous burnt shells. The remaining fill was silty sand, with charcoal flecks, and charcoal lenses, increasing towards the stoke hole.

Oven 2049

This comprised a tear drop shaped oven, 1.6m long by 1.2m wide, with vertical sides and a flat base, lined with clay which had fired hard, and a stoke pit at the east end. The oven fill included a pile of septaria stone and mortar in a matrix of silty sand in the centre. Although the latest pottery associated was EMED, this oven could well belong to the Greyfriars' occupation (i.e. LMED).

The Iron industry

Over 126kg of iron slag was recovered from the 85 EMED pits. Over 50% (64kg) of this total came from three pits (0115, 0143, 0158) which cut the focus of the ELS iron industry just north of smithies 1041 and 1042. 0115 and 0158 are adjacent and both are cut by 0143. This could imply a continuity of production into the EMED period but this large quantity of slag is more likely to be residual and derived from the slag heaps of the ELS industry.

After two centuries of iron production, there must have been large quantities of iron slag on the site and it is impossible to determine how much of it was deposited in later pits. The LMED graves, for example, also produced 4kg of iron slag indicating that it was widely spread across the site in the topsoil. The quantities of residual iron slag is bound to equate with the numbers and size of pits at each later period and the EMED period is characterised by the large number of pits.

The lack of any *in situ* smithing hearths of EMED date favours treating the slag deposited during this period as evidence of iron production with caution.

Cemetery

It is possible that the Group 1 inhumation burials date to the later EMED period but are more likely LMED (see below).

Dating of the Medieval and Later Cemeteries

The most significant aspect of the medieval and later sequence was the use of the site for burial. A total of 150 individuals were excavated, which have been divided into three groups.

Group 1 was an isolated small group of 4 graves on the eastern edge of the site.

Group 2 was a large group of 87 bodies in the north-west of the site. The graves were in slightly haphazard north-south rows and buried deep enough for grave edges to be defined.

Group 3 was a group of 59 bodies in the centre of the site, mostly in north-south rows but with outliers. They were shallow burials, sometimes with multiple burials in one grave, and grave edges were more difficult to define.

The combined pottery from the graves allocated to each group was as follows:

	MS	LS	EMW	LMED	LMT
Group 1	2	52	-	-	-
Group 2	18	197	84	58	1
Group 3	15	264	65	30	

These finds are only helpful in providing a *terminus post quem* for the burial date but the stratigraphy allows more clarity.

The Group 1 graves cut EMED features and were cut by the LMT feature 0037 giving a broad period of c.1100-1450 for their burial. However, the lack of LMED pot in the graves suggests a date early in that date range i.e. 12th/early 13th century.

The central cluster of Group 3 burials cut four LMED pits (0686, 0891, 1010, and 1012), and three burials cut an LMT pit (0648). The LMT pottery did not include 16th century

stonewares and a late 15th century date is likely. The conclusion must be that the group 3 burials are 15th century or later.

The Group 2 burials cut no features later than MLS but the pottery from the graves implies that they are LMED with 3017 being the only grave with an LMT sherd of late 15th century date. A copper alloy belt buckle with grave 2187 was of late 13/14th century type. A C14 date of 1195-1300 (95% confidence) for 2161 was obtained during the making of the BBC TV programme *History Cold Case: Ipswich Man* (screened on 6th May, 2010). As 2061 is at the northern end of the group and 3017 at the southern end it is reasonable to assume that burial proceeded from north to south and over a period of c.1250-1500.

There must be some uncertainty about whether some burials should be placed in Group 2 or 3, especially those assumed to be group 3 outlier burials to the west of the dense central cluster of graves i.e. on the west margin of group 3 and east and south margins of group 2. Although there is some subjectivity in this, the multiple burials (1016, 2055 and 2133) are assumed to be the western extremity of group 3.

Late Medieval: c1200-1450 (LMED)

The LMED occupation on the site comprised a substantial cemetery in the north-west of the site and a smaller cemetery to the east with pits between them including an oven. The whole site lay within the precinct of the Greyfriars from c.1236.

Cemeteries

Group 1 burials (c.1100-1450)

Four graves (0058, 0081, 0100, 0137), containing four individuals (0086, 0088, 0102, 0152), lay in two east-west rows of three on the eastern edge of the site. A grave-shaped feature (0200), just west of 0081, containing no body is likely to be a fifth grave from which the skeleton had been exhumed. A second grave-shaped feature (0188), with no skeleton and cut by grave 0137 was not east-west and unlikely to be a grave.

Graves 0058, 0081 and 0100 cut EMED pit 0092. Empty grave 0200 was cut by LMT pond 0037. The upper body of inhumation 0088 had been 'robbed' by pit 0066.

The graves with inhumations *in situ* contained no pottery later than Thetford ware, which doesn't help clarify their date. The suggested robbed grave (0200) did have one EMED sherd.

The stratigraphic evidence only allows a broad burial date of c.1100-1450 i.e. late EMED or LMED but the lack of LMED pottery in the graves is highly suggestive of a date early in that range.

Analysis of the skeletons (Anderson 2009) revealed that three adults (two female and one male) and one child were represented and that a family relationship was likely between 0086 (young adult female) and 0152 (adult male).

Group 2 burials (c.1250-1500)

Although broadly buried in north-south rows, there was intercutting of graves indicating that certain areas were reused for burial. In some areas, six separate phases can be determined (2210 is cut by 2207, which is cut by 2192, which is cut by 2189, which is cut by 2179).

Evidence of coffins was found in five graves (2204, 3017, 3051, 3100, 3117).

One burial was, presumably by mistake, buried the wrong way around with head at the east end (3185).

22 of the 87 burials were under 18 at death, which is relatively normal for medieval populations. Males predominated (3.5:1, male:female) which is not unusual in lay cemeteries attached to religious houses.

At least four individuals showed evidence of sub-Saharan characteristics (especially 2162 in grave 2161, which was chosen for study in the *History Cold Case: Ipswich Man* television programme).

Pits

There were 29 pits, scattered across the whole site apart from the north-west corner occupied by the Group 2 burials.

The LMED features in the low lying south-west corner of the site were markedly different from the rest and comprised a small complex of shallow pits (3107, 3183 and 3191, with LMED pottery and 3109, 3138, 3161, 3163, with no dating evidence, and two short slots (3140 and 3181). Adjacent and north of these features, was a shallow rectangular pit (3085), 4.8m long by 1-1.4m wide. The fill of waterlain organic silt contained the remains of a timber beam of 20cm square section, and 65cm long.

Pond 0005

Only the edges of this large feature were excavated to define its ground plan and stratigraphic relationship with adjacent features. It measured 13.5m long, from west to east, by 9m wide, with sloping sides. It was excavated to a depth of 50cm but not bottomed. It appeared to be lined with clay and sand and the fill was silty with green tinges observed.

The latest pottery associated was 4 LMED sherds (3 coarseware and 1 Ipswich glazed). It was not cut by any other features but cut at least seven EMED pits and one LMED pit (0008). Finds did include a fragment of a penny (0006/5003N) of Elizabeth 1 (1558-1605). Such a small fragment could easily be intrusive but, if it was *in situ*, would place the dating into the LMT period i.e. the same period as the similar feature to the north (0037), but slightly later, and after the Greyfriars has been dissolved.

Oven 0855

A double flued oven, orientated NW/SE, was found at the south end of the site. The roughly circular oven (0855) was 2.6m in diameter with a flue to the south-east (0879) and north-west (0866). Leading from the oven, both flues were narrow channels (40cm wide) for c.1m, and then opened out into oval pits, 1.3m by 0.8m (0877 on the north-west, and 0880 on the south-east). Carbonised planks (0888) were found in both the oven and narrow flues. A depression (0878), in pit 0877, was full of mollusca and burnt red sand.

Discussion (LMED)

As the site lay within the precinct of the Greyfriars from c.1236 (Knowles and Hadcock 1971, 225), most of the LMED features excavated are likely to relate to Friary activities. The Friary buildings are known to have been located north of the site as many of them survived the Dissolution and are shown on Ogilby's Map of Ipswich (1674). At that time the site lay within what is described as the 'Fryers Orchard'. The eastern precinct wall survived along the eastern edge of the site to be recorded on the OS maps of 1880, 1900 and 1927.

It is clear that the construction of the main Friary buildings required the closure of the north-south roadway traversing the site as the amount of building land between the road and the river's edge was too narrow for the friars to establish the layout of their buildings. Whether this required a new public road on the line of the present Franciscan Way, some 25m further to the east, or whether there was a road there already is unknown. If the Group 1 burials were originally in the churchyard of St Nicholas which

was then encroached upon by the Friary, marooning the burials in their precinct, then it must have been a new road, built outside their eastern precinct wall.

Although the Friary Church was built across the late Saxon street to the north of the site, the remainder of the road may have survived as an internal track leading south through the precinct.

The broad dating of the Group 1 burials allows for three interpretations.

If they are pre Greyfriars, they could belong to the churchyard of St Nicholas which had been established by c.1190 and could have been encroached upon by the Greyfriars when they established their precinct by c.1236. However, if this was the case, it might be expected that the western boundaries of the churchyard would have been found in the excavation. The only boundaries recorded are the two north-south EMED fence lines (0227/0377 and 0380/0858), 13m to the west of the burials. If these are the original western churchyard boundaries then St Nicholas Church appears to be located too far east on the plot and a more central location might be expected.

If they date before the establishment of St Nicholas Church they could represent a family group not interred, for some reason, in a churchyard.

Alternatively, if of medieval date, they would be associated with the Greyfriars. If this is the case, they are likely to be early burials by the Friars, who then decided to abandon this area for burial in favour of the north-west cemetery (Group 2 burials).

The suggested exhumation (0200) (and presumed reburial elsewhere), was carried out before the construction of the large pond (0037) by the Greyfriars and possibly occasioned by it.

The area of the precinct, south of the main Friary buildings, was presumably used for ancillary activities. The Group 2 burials presumably represent the south end of the lay cemetery of the Friary. The functions of the oven (0855) and pond (0005) are not clear. The oven was presumably used in some industrial-type activity involving mollusca. Pond 0005 could also be industrial but a fishpond can't be ruled out. Although a large feature, it is small compared with the fishponds common in rural monastic and high status sites where they acted as breeding tanks for freshwater fish, but it is possible that smaller tanks on urban sites acted as temporary storage for fish, which was in constant demand in religious houses. The Friars' precinct does lie adjacent to the River Gipping channel where fish and mollusca could have been caught.

Similar ponds were also found on the Foundation Street site (IAS4601) which lay across the road from the precinct of the Blackfriars. The function of these ponds is further considered below (LMT discussion).

Late Medieval Transitional: c.1450-1600(LMT)

Phase 1 (c.1450-1540)

Pond 0037

This pond measured 13.5m from west to east by 5m wide, with a flat bottom, cut to a depth of some 35cm metres below the surface of the natural sub-soil. It had originally been excavated to below the surface of the water table and had a black silty organic layer on its base overlain with a grey-green clay layer. Remnants of a clay lining (0616) were recorded at the west end.

The pottery associated was almost exclusively residual earlier wares with one LMT earthenware sherd. It was cut by pit 0047, which was also associated with LMT, but including two diagnostic 16th century stoneware sherds. The implication is that 0037 is more likely to have been filled in the late 15th century and is certainly associated with the Friary.

A sample of waterlogged sediment from the fill of 0037 (0783) was taken for analysis. It contained little refuse and the macro botanical analysis (Fryer and Murphy, 1993)

suggested that the feature was likely to have remained open, with grassland weeds accumulating naturally.

Discussion (LMT phase 1)

The lack of any aquatic species in the sediment from tank 0037 tends to imply that this feature and that of the LMED example (0005) to the south were unlikely to be fish stocking tanks, although equally there is little to suggest that they were associated with any industrial process.

Phase 2 (c.1540-1600)

Group 3 Burials

59 burials were allocated to this group, most of which were densely buried in the centre of the site, with nine graves scattered to the west of the main group. Most of the graves were shallow and contained within the topsoil making grave edges difficult to define. However, it was clear that there were a number of multiple burials, which included at least eight double burials and one with five burials.

Two burials were laid face down (0893 and 0894 in grave 0892) and one middle aged male (0837 in grave 0836) was also buried with iron manacles (0843, 0166/5003F) around his wrists.

Only 6 of the 59 individuals were under 18 at death, which is far below the norm, and the ratio of male to female was 3:1 (male:female), which is also not typical of the general population. Five individuals (all male and buried in one row) showed sub-Saharan characteristics (0881, 0924, 0925, 0942, 0971 in graves 0881, 0923, 0941, 0970)).

There were two cases of leprosy (no longer endemic in England at this time).

Discussion (LMT phase 2)

The Group 3 burials are clearly 16th century or later and post date the dissolution of the friary in 1534. The group is unusual both in burial custom and the nature of the population represented. The multiple occupancy graves suggest a higher than normal death rate, resulting in the need for more rapid burial as found at a time of plague epidemic. Grave 0892, which contained the two young-mature adult males (0893, 0894) buried face downwards, is highly suggestive of either haste at the time of burial or a lack of Christian respect. Perhaps the most interesting burial within the group is that of the young to mature adult male (0837) within grave 0836, interred with manacles around both wrists. Inspection of the manacle (0843, 0166/5003F), provides little diagnostic information that might date the burial more closely.

None of the town maps from Speed (1610) onwards show any evidence for the land in question serving as a cemetery and, by the time of Pennington's map (1778), much of the land was given over to private gardens.

Breen's survey of the documentary evidence for St. Nicholas parish provides a number of possible explanations. Plague outbreaks were not uncommon in the late 16th-early 17th century (Breen 2003, 7) and the St. Nicholas parish records refer to at least one outbreak in 1603-04 prior to the Great Plague of 1665-66. Breen also notes that, during the later 17th century, the parish records for St. Nicholas refer to the occasional burial of prisoners from either the Town or County Gaol. Which gaol is not specified, although the County Gaol seems more likely, being located within St. Nicholas parish, in the remnant of the former claustral range of former Carmelite friary, shown on Ogilby's map of the town, 1674(the St Stephen's Lane site, IAS3104).

Post Medieval: c.1600-1900 (PMED)

A series of concrete stanchion pads at the north end of the site, associated with a number of concrete-floored tanks set below ground surface level, relate to the timber yard, established in the late 19th century.

Scope for further Research

Analysis of the metalworking residues from this site (and others) would make a significant contribution to the study of Anglo-Saxon urban industry.

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