

Site name: 24 St. Helen's Street

Site ref: IAS 3601 HER ref: IPS 329 CIMS Accession No.: IPSMG:R.2009.39

NGR: TM16774454 Extent: 5 sq m

Circumstances of excavation

The redevelopment of this site in 1975 involved the hand excavation of six stanchion holes (0002, 0003, 0006, 0009, 0067, 0068) to support the new build. Monitoring of these footing trenches by the Suffolk Archaeological Unit observed the walls of a pottery kiln, producing Thetford ware, in the west face of trench 0067, and the east face of trench 0068, suggesting that the bulk of the kiln lay between the two stanchions. Permission was granted by the owner (Mr Ivan Baker) to excavate another trench between these two stanchions once these had been filled with concrete. The trench (0004), 2.4m x 1.2m, was hand excavated by SCCAS and the other stanchion holes were monitored during building works.

Site constraints

Although the kiln oven was available for excavation, the area of stoke hole was not excavated as it lay below a brick wall that was retained within the new development.

Funding bodies

Suffolk County Council and DoE Ancient Monuments Branch.

Stratigraphic sequence (by period)

Monitoring of the other stanchion holes (0002, 0003, 0006, 0009, 0067 and 0068) observed evidence of rubbish pits containing pottery and, in the case of trench 0002, possible kiln debris. These pits could not be recorded and none of the pottery collected from them was stratified.

Middle Saxon: c.700-850(MS)

A high proportion of the unstratified pottery from trenches 0002, 0003, 0006, 0009, 0067 and 0068 was Ipswich ware including two whole pots from trench 0003, strongly suggesting that Ipswich ware was also manufactured in the vicinity.

Pit 0013

Pit (0013), in trench 4, was cut by kiln 0070. The only find recovered was a silver pin (0064, 0001/3601S), of Middle Saxon date.

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

Kiln 70

The oven pit was rectangular and 1.4m x 1.2m with rounded corners with fired clay walls (0015) and floor (0061) with a flue arch (0062) at the south end. The fill, from bottom to top, was:

Layer of whole pots (0022), comprising 17 whole and 2 three quarter complete pottery vessels, mainly wasters, from kiln floor

Lower layer of kiln debris (0020)

Pottery rich loam deposit (0014, 0016, 0019)

Ipswich Archive Site Summaries

Top layer of kiln debris (0010, 0017)

The layer of wasters recovered from the floor of the kiln suggests that they may have been used as supports in place of permanent or moveable kiln furniture.

Early Medieval: c.1000-1200(EMED)

A ground surface layer (0007, 0008, 0012) overlay the kiln in trench 0004 and was dated EMED on the basis of one sherd of EMW pottery (with 630 sherds of Thetford ware and 6 sherds of Ipswich ware).

Post Medieval: c.1600-1900(PMED)

One wall footing (0011), cut layer 0007, 0008, 0012.

Keith Wade 2013