

Site name: Lower Brook Street / Foundation Street

Site ref: IAS 5505 HER ref: IPS 733 CIMS Accession No: IPSMG:R.2009.67

NGR: TM16484416 Extent: 30 sq m

Circumstances of excavation

Redevelopment of the former Rands and Jeckell site, at the junction of Foundation Street and Lower Brook Street, provided an opportunity to sample an area lying at the junction of two important early streets. The site was excavated in 1988 by the Suffolk Archaeological Unit.

Site constraints

The excavation was limited to an area, up to 8m north-south (NE-SW) by 5m east-west (SE-NW), by the redevelopment programme, depth of overburden and cellars along the whole eastern side of the site (which formed the east (SE) side of the excavation).

The small area excavated and the lack of finds in many features (11 of the 32) renders satisfactory interpretation difficult.

Funding bodies

The excavation was funded by Suffolk County Council and the MSC scheme.

Note that descriptions in the stratigraphic account assume a N-S orientation of the site rather than the more accurate NE-SW alignment.

Stratigraphic sequence (by period)

The exposed natural subsoil surface sloped gently from c.2.55m OD in the north to c. 2.35m OD at the south.

Of the 32 contexts, there were 6 pits, 4 slots and 22 postholes.

The majority were structural features, relating to a sequence of buildings, constructed on a north-south orientation.

Only two features (post holes 0019 and 0038) contained Ipswich ware only (one sherd in each). As both features appear to belong to later structures, it is possible that the Middle Saxon period is not represented at all on this site.

The dating evidence for the main structural features is shown below.

| Context | | IPSWICH | BADORF | THETFORD | EMW |
|-----------|-------|---------|--------|----------|-----|
| 0015 | slot | 9 | 1 | 1 | |
| 0042 | slot | | | 6 | 3 |
| 0040 | slot | | | | 1 |
| 0014/0026 | Slot? | | | 2 | |

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

Two contexts belong to this period on ceramic evidence: a linear north-south slot (0015/0016) and a post hole, 0009. However, the post hole is located at the southern end of a complex of Early Medieval post holes and is more likely to be of that date.

Slot 0015

As 10 of the 11 sherds from slot *0015* are Middle Saxon there is a significant possibility that it is Middle Saxon in date.

The slot was 28cm wide, 14-20cm deep, of square section and over 2.4m long as it continued south outside the area excavated. There were no traces of vertical posts in its fill. It is likely, therefore to have held a timber sill beam

Given the limited area actually excavated, it is difficult to ascertain with any certainty whether there are related structural features associated with the slot. An undated depression with traces of three post holes (*0043*), lying directly east of its northern butt end, and an undated posthole (*0020*) 1m east might indicate the north wall of a building, most of which has been removed by the complex of EMED structural features to the east.

The line of postholes (*0017, 0018, 0019, 0025*) running north from slot *0015* seems likely to be part of the same structure, or a fence running from its north-west corner, but posthole *0018* contained 1EMW sherd which appears to rule this out. However, postholes *0019* and *0025* were undated and *0017* had Ipswich ware only.

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

Only one pit (*0003*) certainly belongs to this period with one which can only be dated Late Saxon, or later (*0039*).

Pit 3

This pit was 0.8m deep, with its base resting on the water table. There were however no organic remains recovered from the lower fill levels (*0008*).

Early Medieval: c.1000-1200 (EMED)

Structure 0063

The west wall of this building ran north-south and formed by two post-in-trench slots (*0005* and *0042*).

Slot *0005* was more than 4.6m long (it continued south outside the excavated area). The base was cut by 12 closely spaced stake holes of c.10cm diameter in a zig-zag line (*0023, 0028, 0029, 0032, 0037, 0047, 0048, 0057, 0058, 0059, 0060, 0061*) indicating a flimsy construction of woven wickerwork around vertical stakes.

A northward continuation to this slot (*0042*), 2.2m long, may indicate an extension of this structure, and also produced evidence of stake holes cut into its base (*0046, 0049, 0050*).

It is tentatively suggested that remnants of a parallel slot (*0040*) and three postholes (*0013, 0014, 0026*), lying 3m to the east, against the eastern edge of the excavation, forms part of the eastern wall of the same structure.

Two post holes (*0012, 0016*) forming a line at right angles to the west and east walls, suggest the existence of an internal partition. Two depressions (*007, 0011*), formed by the cuttings of a number of further stake holes (*0027, 0030, 0031, 0033, 0034, 0035, 0036*), seems to be associated, although their structural significance is uncertain.

Post hole *0009*, also adjacent, is unlikely to be associated.

Post hole *0018*, which forms one of a complex of posts lying in the far northwest corner of the excavation appears to be contemporary in date, but makes more sense as part of an earlier structure (see ELS period).

Pit 0004

Ipswich Archive Site Summary

This circular pit, measuring some 1.3m in diameter, cut linear slot 5 (Building 0063). It was only excavated to a depth of c. 1.10m in depth as the water table was reached 0.7m (1.70m OD) below the natural subsoil surface.

Late Medieval: c.1200-1450 (LMED)

Pit 0044, at the north end in the of the excavation, and cut by a PMED pit (0045), was the only feature on the site of this period.

Post Medieval: c.1600-1900 (PMED)

Pit 0045, cutting LMED pit 0044, lay mainly outside the limits of the excavation. Part of a brick soak-away, lying in the southwest corner of the excavation, was the only other feature of this period represented on this site.

Finds

A thread picker (1/5505B) was recovered from 0010, the lower fill of pit 0004, (scanned image IAS5505_1-5505B-bonetool.jpg)

Potential for further research

Low.

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