

Site name: 85-87 Fore Street

Site ref: IAS 6106 HER ref: IPS 585 CIMS Accession No: IPSMG:R.2009.71

NGR: TM16834416 Extent: 72 sq m

Circumstances of excavation

Planning permission (I/89/1363/FP) was granted for an office development on this already cleared site.

Site Constraints

Funding was only available for sample excavation of the site and the area excavated lay at the south end, c.5m back from Fore Street, to avoid any Victorian basements. Post-1990 further excavation has taken place on the same development area.

Funding bodies

The excavation, by the Suffolk Archaeological Unit in 1990, was funded by the prospective developer, Paxsign Ltd.

Stratigraphic sequence (by period)

Middle Saxon: c. 700-850 (MS)

Although no contexts of this period were recorded, the site produced 921 sherds of Ipswich ware, of which only 350 came from the ELS features. This is highly suggestive of MS occupation in this area as it seems too much to be all from the changeover ELS period.

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

A ditch (0007), a short length of foundation trench (0019), five pits (0015, 0016, 0020, 0038, 0040) and a possible well (0011) belonged to this period.

		Ipswich Ware	MS Import	Thetford Ware
0007	ditch	17	1	69
0011	Well?	91		1
0015	pit	6		20
0016	pit	190		5
0020	pit	13		12
0038	pit	1		2
0040	pit	32		1

The assemblage from pit 0040 was particularly interesting in that the 32 Ipswich ware sherds were accompanied by one complete Thetford ware vessel only. Similarly, well 0011 and pit 0016 had very small quantities of Thetford ware. These three features, which run in a north-south line on the east side of the site, must represent the period when Thetford ware was first available i.e. c. 850.

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

One pit (0013) belonged to this period. The pottery assemblage included only one St Neot's ware sherd (with 275 Thetford sherds).

Early Medieval: c.1000-1200 (EMED)

Two sunken featured buildings (0027, 0033) and six pits (0009, 0010, 0026, 0030, 0034, 0043) belonged to this period.

Building 0027 (see scanned plan IAS6106_0027.tif)

This sunken featured structure had been truncated at its west end by EMED pit 0034 and its east end lay outside of the excavated area. 2.3m of its length was excavated and it was 2.4m wide with a pit 50cm deep. The base of the pit was lined with stake holes, c.30cm apart, along the north and south sides. One posthole (0057) lay along the south side.

Building 0033 (see scanned plan IAS6106_0033.tif)

Only the east end of this sunken featured building survived as it had been truncated to the west by the cellar of LMT building 0004. It was 3.8m wide, north-south, with a pit 1-1.1m deep. There were five postholes along the east wall and one in what survived of both the north and south walls. Traces of a potential sloping evidence (0036) were recorded on the south side of the building.

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

A building (0004) and three pits (0029, 0046, 0050) belonged to this period.

Building 0004

The east side of a brick cellar, c.5m north-south, lay on the west edge of the excavation. The robbing trench (0003) for a wall running south to Fore Street was on the same line as the cellar east wall.

Post Medieval: c.1600-1900 (PMED)

A circular brick soakaway (0008) belonged to this period.

Undated

Ten contexts produced no pottery to assist dating. A group of three postholes (0021, 0022, 0024), at the south end of the site, were not associated with any other features. The small pit 0018 was ELS or earlier. Four pits (0052, 0053, 0054, 0074) were EMED or later and pit 0056 was EMED or earlier. Pit 0039 was earlier than LMT.

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