

Site name: Little Whip Street

Site ref: IAS 7404 HER ref: IPS 143 CIMS Accession No: IPSMG:R.2009.50

NGR: TM16474379 Extent: 242 sq m

Circumstances of excavation

Ipswich Borough Council, as landowner, gained planning permission (I/1016/79) for development of this vacant site with industrial units and gave permission for the Suffolk Archaeological Unit to excavate it in 1980.

Site constraints

There were no constraints on the excavation.

Funding bodies

The excavation was funded by Suffolk County Council, the Department of the Environment (Ancient Monuments Branch) and the Manpower Services Commission (Youth Opportunities Programme).

Stratigraphic sequence (by period)

There was little evidence of pre MS occupation with no Roman pottery and only 10 grass tempered EMS sherds.

Middle Saxon: c.700-850 (MS)

Six pits (0005, 0006, 0009, 0030, 0055, 0078) and a short length of foundation trench (0025), in the north half of the site, belonged to this period. A flotation column was taken from pit 0005. The site produced a total of 422 sherds of Ipswich ware and 11 MS imports but no pre-medieval coins other than one Roman bronze (0002/7404N), a 3rd century radiate, in pit 0055.

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

One pit (0054), which cuts MS pit 0055, may belong to this period. The pottery assemblage comprised 48 Ipswich ware sherds, 2 Tating ware and one Thetford ware. The LMT roof tile recorded was most likely contamination from the west side of PMED posthole 0088 which was not recognised during excavation. However, some of the MS pottery could be derived from pit 0055, which it cuts.

Early Medieval: c.1000-1200 (EMED)

Ten pits (0020, 0022, 0027, 0058, 0063, 0071, 0075, 0081, 0089, 0091), in a north-south row across the site, a short length of foundation trench (0042), and a large posthole/small pit (0073), belonged to this period. Pit 0075, with 4 unprovenanced glazed sherds and 0081, with one sherd of London glazed ware, must be late 12th century or possibly early 13th century.

Late Medieval: c.1200-1450 (LMED)

Five pits (0008, 0035, 0052, 0064, 0110), at the north end of the site, belonged to this period.

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

Four pits (0004, 0010, 0029, 0032) at the north end of the site, belonged to this period.

Post Medieval: c.1600-1900 (PMED)

Redevelopment of the area had started by the late 17th century. Ogilby's map of 1674 shows two semi-detached houses on the Little Whip Street frontage, at the south end of the site, and two buildings fronting Great Whip Street, at the north end of the site. By 1881, the OS map shows the whole area developed with terraced housing. Remnants of these houses, and the associated outbuildings and drainage features, survived across the whole site.

Some of the PMED features clearly predate this redevelopment (earlier 17th century) but the lack of detailed analysis of the PMED pot prevents a full identification. However, a large oven (0104) and pit 0103 certainly dated to the late 16th-17th century, prior to the redevelopment of the area. The oven chamber was 1.4m in diameter with a stoke hole extending 1.5m on its north side.

The majority of PMED features were undoubtedly 19th century. The bases of five rectangular brick outbuildings (0036, 0037, 0092, 0121, 0125), five wall foundation trenches (0007, 0046, 0096, 0122, 0126), two wells (0072, 0080), five pipe trenches (0061, 0069, 0079, 0123, 0124), three pits (0019, 0053, 0070), and six postholes (0002, 0003, 0013, 0044, 0088, 0108) belonged to this period.

Modern: c.1900 onwards (MOD)

A drainage inspection chamber (0127) was modern.

Undated

There were over 30 undated features. Of the postholes, six (0076, 0077, 0084, 0085, 0086, 0111) formed a north-south fence line, but the others were randomly located.

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