

**Site Name: Smart Street**

Site ref: IAS 5701                      HER ref: IPS 212              CIMS Accession No: IPSMG:R.2009.62

NGR TM16554422                      Extent: 265 sq m

**Circumstances of excavation**

Ipswich Borough Council, as owners of the site, commissioned the excavation so that the land could be sold for residential development free of archaeological constraints.

**Site Constraints**

The parcel of land was a Scheduled Monument (Suffolk County no.190) and Ipswich Borough Council obtained scheduled monument consent for the excavation and subsequent development from the Secretary of State for the Environment.

During the mechanical soil stripping, it was clear that Victorian basements had destroyed up to 75% of the northern half of the Foundation Street frontage (up to 6m back from the pavement) and this was not excavated. A strip was also left unexcavated at the south end to safeguard the standing properties to the south of the site from potential damage.

**Funding bodies**

The site was excavated in 1984 by the Suffolk Archaeological Unit and funded by Suffolk County Council, Ipswich Borough Council, English Heritage and the Manpower Services Commission (Community Programme).

**Stratigraphic sequence (by period)**

***Middle Saxon: c.700-c.850 (MS)***

Eight pits belonged to this period (*0017, 0052, 0142, 0143, 0166, 0177, 0197, 0201*) and probably one well (*0026*). Two sceattas (*0004/5701N, 0005/5701N*), deposited c.740-760, were recovered from pit *0166* and a single sceatta (*0002/5701N*), deposited c.720-740, from pit *0017*.

**Well 0026**

The roughly oval well pit was over 3.2m wide at the top, tapering to 1.8m at its base, and 3.1m deep. The timber well shaft comprised a circle, 50cm in diameter, of individually split oak planks surviving up to 80cm high above the bottom of the well.

The base of the shaft was not fully excavated, but ten staves from the west side were recovered: eight from the shaft (*0073, 0074, 0075, 0076, 0077, 0078, 0079, 0081*) and two timber fragments (*0080, 0082*) from the outside edge of the main ring (shown as *0253* on the general plan). The edges of the staves were chamfered as with barrel staves, but no means of securing the staves was evident.

The timbers were submitted for dendrochronology and a date later than AD 712 was determined for the felling of the tree. The pottery dating implies that this is far too early for the use of the staves in the well. The well pit (*0026*) produced two Ipswich ware and two Thetford ware sherds implying an ELS construction date but the lack of any pottery other than Ipswich ware in the shaft fill contradicts this and suggest that the Thetford ware sherds may well have resulted from a final filling of the shaft. Evidence of the shaft was

only recorded 50cm below the top of the feature, implying a collapse and/or deliberate infilling of the top of the shaft after a long period of silting. Unfortunately, the depth of the Thetford ware sherds was not recorded. However, the well pit was cut by ELS pit 0027 and a late MS date for the construction of the well seems most likely.

If the two Thetford ware sherds do genuinely reflect an ELS construction date for the well, the timber used for the barrel staves would have been very old at the time of use or cut from the heartwood of a large oak which was not felled until much after AD 712.

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

Sixteen pits (0027, 0061, 0118, 0127, 0158, 0170, 0178, 0179, 0182, 0184, 0187, 0190, 0208, 0221, 0230, 0237), one well (0053) and a hearth (0249) belonged to this period.

**Well 0053**

The almost vertical well pit was 1.9m diameter at the top, tapering to 1.45m at its base, and 3.2m deep. The shaft had two separate linings. The upper lining, a hollowed-out oak trunk, 90cm in diameter, survived to within 2.2m of the top of the feature and was recovered in a number of separate pieces (0092, 0094, 0095, 0096, 0097, with all wood shown as 0254 on the general plan).

Below this tree trunk lining, there was a ring of staves, of narrower diameter (0089, 0090, 0091, 0093), forming a lower lining. The staves had all been cut to shape, although 0090 had the addition of a half lap joint, with a peg hole at one end, which had been found facing downwards in the fill at the base of the shaft. Stave 0091 possessed a chamfered end. Excavation was restricted by health and safety concerns and the difficulty of pumping water from below the level of the main timber lining. As a result, the well was not fully bottomed, although the level reached was similar in depth to that of the base of the adjacent MS well (0026).

No traces of a central shaft were visible in the top 1.4m of the pit (0053), which comprised layers of backfilled sand, gravel and loam. This implies that the oak lining, above the water table, had either been removed or rotted away prior to the final filling of the feature. As with well 0026, dating is difficult.

Layer		Ipswich Ware	MS Import	Thetford Ware
0048	Upper fill of shaft	4		10
0088	Lower fill of shaft	4		1
0053	Well pit	11	2	3
		19	2	14

Unfortunately, there is no additional evidence available from dendrochronology, as the oak sections could not be dated or were unsuitable for dating. However, as Thetford ware was recovered from both the well pit and lower shaft, an ELS date is most likely.

**Pits**

Of the sixteen pits, six pits were inter-cutting and in a line running from north to south across the site (0127, 0118, 0237, 0208, 0182, 0184).

**Hearth 0249**

A hearth (0249) comprising a gravel base overlain with fired clay, and probably domestic, lay in the south-west corner of the site.

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

A sunken featured building (0062), eleven rubbish pits (0150, 0154, 0157, 0167, 0168, 0188, 0206, 0216, 0220, 0225, 0229) and a possible well (0041) belonged to this period. Some intercutting of pits was recorded indicating more than one phase of activity.

An Edmund Memorial penny, lost c.905-15, was found residual in EMED pit 0059.

**Building 0062** (see scanned plan IAS5701\_0062.tif)

This sunken featured building was over 4.3m east-west (the east end lay outside the excavated area), 4.8m north-south, and 90cm deep. A continuous foundation trench (0126, 0128, 0248, 0251), varying in depth between 35cm and 45cm below the floor, surrounded the edge of the three exposed sides. It varied in width from 80cm on its southern side (0251), to only 40cm on the west (0248). No evidence for posts in the slots was observed. A number of post holes were found cutting the base of the cellar, nine of which (0122, 0123, 0124, 0129, 0132, 0133, 0135, 0137, 0138) ran parallel and close to the inside edge of the northern slot (0128). A fine layer of sand, level with the base of the cellar, sealed posthole 0123, and indicated the only surviving traces of a floor surface on the base of the pit. It also indicated that at least some of these post holes may have no longer been serving their original function well before the final phase of the structure. Some of these post holes (0122, 0123, 0124, 0129) were fairly large and the outline of a post was recorded within 0129. Although post holes 0122 and 0123 might conceivably have formed the north end of a partition, of which no other evidence survived, a structural purpose is more likely. On the north side of the pit, and north of foundation trench 0128, was the start of a sloping entrance (0136), truncated to the north by EMED pits 0042 and 0057, and flanked by post hole 0121 on the east side and 0125 and 0131 on the west side. A thick sloping clay layer, covering 0125 and a part of slot 0128, suggests a modification of the cellar entrance. The cellar pit did not cut any other MLS features, but did cut ELS pits 0118 and 0127. The cutting of the in-filled building by MLS pit 0220, suggests that abandonment took place before the end of the tenth century.

**? Well 0041**

This pit was over 3.5m in diameter and 2.5m deep and, although no sign of timbers were recorded, its unusually large size may indicate a well.

***Early Medieval: c.1000-1200 (EMED)***

Twenty-two pits (0004, 0007, 0009, 0020, 0021, 0023, 0024, 0025, 0028, 0042, 0057, 0059, 0105, 0145, 0147, 0151, 0156, 0189, 0204, 0210, 0232, 0236) belonged to this period and were spread evenly across the site, with no obvious pattern. Intercutting of pits indicates up to three phases of activity.

***Late Medieval: c.1200-1450 (LMED)***

Eight pits (0002, 0016, 0018, 0035, 0050, 0054, 0173, 0176) belonged to this period. The site was within the precinct of the Ipswich Blackfriars during this period but south of the friary buildings in an area described on Ogilby's map (1674) as the 'Friars Garden'.

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

Three pits can be assigned to this period (0003, 0140, 0141).

**Linear pit 0003**

This measured 5.2m east-west, 2m north-south and 50cm deep. The pit had vertical sides and three post holes (0013, 0014, 0015), located in the base along the north side, indicating a timber revetment along the walls. The fill comprised an even filling of dark grey loam with mortar and brick rubble.

**Linear pit 0140**

Similar to 0003, this pit measured 6.6m east-west, over 1.3m north-south (the south edge being outside the excavation area) and 50cm deep, with post holes (0148, 0149, 0196) along the edge of the base, implying a wooden lining of the pit. Some decomposed wood fragments survived within post hole 0148. Although the only dating material was LMED pottery, the feature cut LMED pit 0173 and the survival of decomposed wood in post hole 0148 suggests an LMT date, contemporary with 0003, or later.

**Pit 0141**

This shallow pit, with LS pottery only, and adjacent to and cut by linear pit 0140, also cut LMED pits 0173 and 0176, and had much pin tile and mortar in its fill, implying an LMT date.

***Post-Medieval: c.1600-1900 (PMED)***

Two brick lined wells (0034, 0209), two soakaways (0005, 0139), a pit (0146) and the residue of a brick lined cellar (0246) were all associated with the Victorian terraced housing which fronted Foundation Street.

*Keith Wade 2014*