

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

OLD WATERWORKS SITE UNION STREET WEST, STOWMARKET (SMR ref. SKT 032)

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF
GROUNDWORK ASSOCIATED WITH A RETAIL DEVELOPMENT
(Application No. 1298/02)

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Report No. 2005/137
(OASIS Ref. suffolke1-10191)

Summary: Archaeological monitoring of the groundwork associated with the construction of a retail development on the site of a former waterworks adjacent Union Street, Stowmarket (NGR TM 0490 5877), was undertaken during February 2005. The monitoring followed on from an evaluation in which a small number of medieval pits and possible postholes were identified. No further archaeological features or dating evidence was recovered during the monitoring visits but only a relatively small proportion of the site was examined as much of the groundwork involved the raising of levels or only shallow excavations. This monitoring event is recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record under the reference SKT 032. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, with funding from the developer, Aldi Stores (Chelmsford) Ltd.

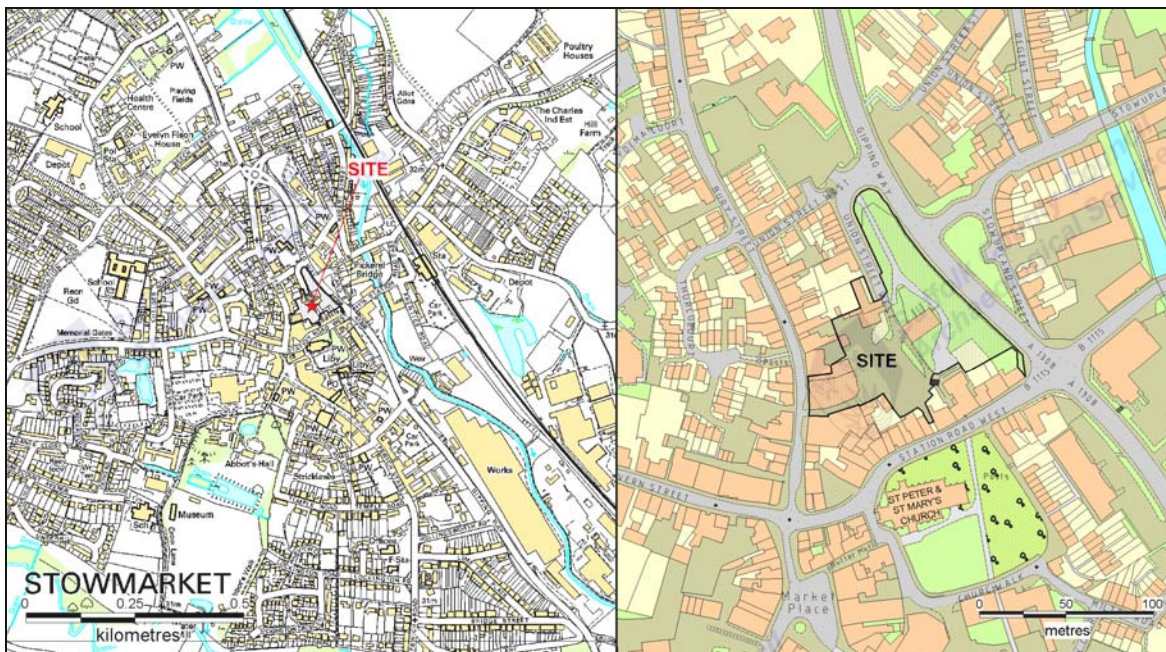


Figure 1: Location Plan

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Introduction

An application for the reconstruction and reconfiguration of existing retail premises and the construction of a large retail store on land partially occupied by, or adjacent to, the former Stowmarket waterworks, Station Road West/Union Street, Stowmarket

(application no. 1298/02), was approved but with an attached condition requiring a programme of archaeological works to be put in place prior to any construction work.

The archaeological interest in the site was due to its location within the known extent of the medieval town of Stowmarket. An archaeological evaluation formed the initial stage of the programme of works and this was carried out through the excavation of a series of trenches across the site to assess the extent and nature of any archaeological deposits or features that may be present. The evaluation (Moore and Parsons 2004) revealed a number of 12th-13th, or possible early 14th, century domestic rubbish pits which were interpreted as the result of medieval activity in the rear yards of plots that fronted what is now Station Road West.

Much of the proposed development would entail the raising of levels to form a plateau for the construction of a new store and it was only the preparation of the carpark, the reconfiguration of a property fronting Bury Street and the insertion of an underground tank that had the potential to reveal and damage archaeological deposits. In the light of the evaluation results and taking the proposed construction methods into consideration the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team, agreed that the area affected by the development could be adequately recorded under a monitoring condition and for this a Brief and Specification was produced (Appendix 1).

The National Grid Reference for the approximate centre of the site is TM 0490 5877; for a location plan see figure 1 above. This monitoring event is recorded on the Suffolk County Sites and Monuments Record under the reference SKT 032. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team, with funding from the developer, Aldi Stores (Chelmsford) Ltd.

Results

A total of three visits were made to the site during February 2005 to observe the groundwork then underway. See Figure 2 for locations of details noted below.

The first visit was made on the 2nd February 2005. A small area of the site in the vicinity of a new southern entrance had been stripped of topsoil down to the level of the natural subsoil, which comprised orange sand and gravel (at approximately 35.5m OD). The surface of the natural appeared to have been previously truncated, presumably during the construction of post-medieval properties that formerly fronted the street, and no archaeological features or deposits were identified. A cable trench, c.0.5m wide and 0.5m deep, had been excavated but was entirely within made ground and no archaeological features or deposits were identified.

The second visit was made on the 21st February 2005 to inspect two test holes that had been excavated to assess the existing foundations of a property fronting Bury Street. Prior to the development this structure had been much larger but was truncated to increase the parking area for the new store. Two small hand dug test pits, c.1m square, had been excavated to the rear of the truncated structure in an area that was formerly within the building. The floor slab had been removed and the test pit revealed it had been formed directly onto the truncated surface of the natural subsoil, which comprised yellow silty sand. No archaeological features or deposits were present.

The final visit to the site was to examine the excavation for an underground tank. A large excavation, c. 4m square, was open. It was cut through the topsoil and into the natural subsoil but no archaeological features or deposits were noted. It was not possible to observe too closely but the interface between the topsoil and the subsoil was very sharp suggesting the natural subsoil had been previously truncated.

The surface of any spoil tips present on the site during a monitoring visits were rapidly examined for artefacts but none were recovered.

No further visits were made to the site.

The monitoring archive from this project will be deposited at the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service offices in Bury St Edmunds under the reference SKT 032, it is also recorded on the OASIS, online database, reference: suffolkc1-10191.

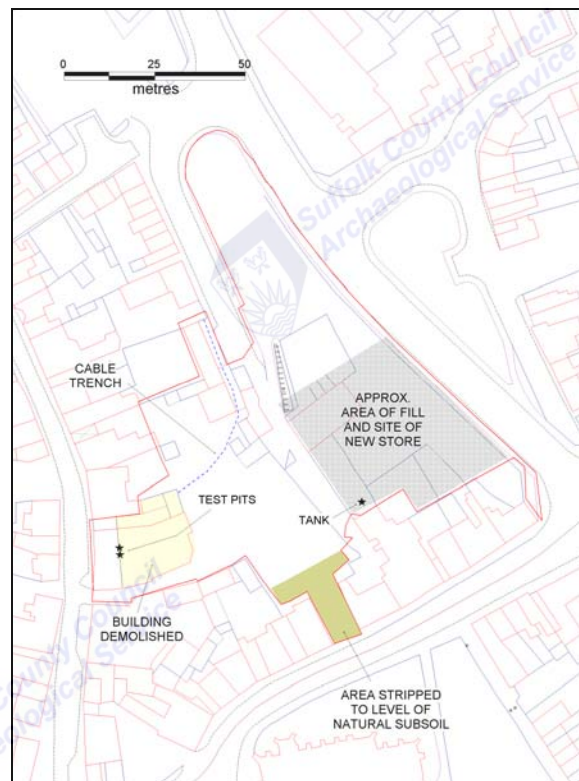


Figure 2: Monitoring Details

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Conclusion

No significant archaeological deposits or features appear to have been destroyed by this development. The monitoring gave good opportunities to observe for archaeological interventions into the natural subsoil but none were identified although only a very small proportion of the total site was subjected to archaeological monitoring.

References

- Moore, J. and Parsons, M. (2004) *An Archaeological Evaluation of The Former Waterworks Site, Union Street, Stowmarket*, Jon Moore Heritage Services

APPENDIX I

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM

Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring

OLD WATERWORKS SITE, UNION STREET, STOWMARKET

1. Background

- 1.1 Planning permission to erect a retail store and car parking on this site has been granted conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (1298/02). Assessment of the available archaeological evidence and the proposed level of ground disturbance indicates that the area affected can be adequately recorded by archaeological monitoring.
- 1.2 The proposal lies within the area of archaeological interest defined for Stowmarket medieval town in the County Sites and Monuments Record and will involve significant ground disturbance.
- 1.3 The site was evaluated by trenching by John Moore Heritage Services in March/April 2004, apart from the western end which was still covered by standing buildings, with the following results:
 - a) Trenches 2 and 3 on the lower part of the site fronting Gipping Way produced only post medieval features associated with the Waterworks.
 - b) Trench 1 along the eastern margin of the higher western part of the site produced numerous inter-cutting pits and postholes of medieval date visible at 35.7 MOD (40-80cm below existing ground levels).
- 1.4 Ground levels on the eastern lower part of the site, which is of least interest archaeologically, are to be raised considerably for the scheme and this area is the location of the new retail store.
- 1.5 Ground levels on the western half of the site, which is all to be car park, will not be reduced significantly, but mechanical stripping could reveal the tops of archaeological features before they are sealed with sub-base material for the car park surface.
- 1.6 The conclusion must be that although there is a high potential for medieval features to be present in the western half of the site, groundworks are unlikely to destroy them.
- 1.7 The most appropriate archaeological response is, therefore, a monitoring of groundworks, including drainage trenches, by a trained archaeologist.

2. Brief for Archaeological Monitoring

- 2.1 To provide a record of archaeological deposits which would be damaged or removed by any development [including services and landscaping] permitted by the current planning consent.
- 2.2 The main academic objective will centre upon the potential of this development to produce evidence for the medieval occupation of the site.
- 2.3 The significant archaeologically damaging activity in this proposal is the mechanical stripping of the site for the car park areas and the excavation of drainage trenches. These, and the upcast soil, are to be observed during and after they have been excavated by the building contractor.

3. Arrangements for Monitoring

- 3.1 The developer or his archaeologist will give the County Archaeologist (Keith Wade, Archaeological Service, Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR. Telephone: 01284 352440; Fax: 01284 352443) 48 hours notice of the commencement of site works.

- 3.2 To carry out the monitoring work the developer will appoint an archaeologist (the observing archaeologist) who must be approved by the Planning Authority's archaeological adviser (the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service).
- 3.3 Allowance must be made to cover archaeological costs incurred in monitoring the development works by the contract archaeologist. The size of the contingency should be estimated by the approved archaeological contractor, based upon the outline works in paragraph 2.3 of the Brief and Specification and the building contractor's programme of works and timetable.
- 3.4 If unexpected remains are encountered, the County Archaeologist should be immediately informed so that any amendments deemed necessary to this specification to ensure adequate provision for recording, can be made without delay. This could include the need for archaeological excavation of parts of the site which would otherwise be damaged or destroyed.

4. **Specification**

- 4.1 The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to both the County Archaeologist and the 'observing archaeologist' to allow archaeological observation of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.
- 4.2 Opportunity should be given to the 'observing archaeologist' to hand excavate any discrete archaeological features which appear during earth moving operations, retrieve finds and make measured records as necessary.
- 4.3 In the case of footing trenches unimpeded access at the rate of one and half hours per 10 metres of trench must be allowed for archaeological recording before concreting or building begin. Where it is necessary to see archaeological detail one of the soil faces is to be trowelled clean.
- 4.4 All archaeological features exposed should be planned at a minimum scale of 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development.
- 4.5 All contexts should be numbered and finds recorded by context as far as possible.
- 4.6 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Sites and Monuments Record.

5. **Report Requirements**

- 5.1 An archive of all records and finds is to be prepared consistent with the principles of *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)*, particularly Appendix 3. This must be deposited with the County Sites and Monuments Record within 3 months of the completion of work. It will then become publicly accessible.
- 5.2 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with *UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines*. The finds, as an indissoluble part of the site archive, should be deposited with the County SMR if the landowner can be persuaded to agree to this. If this is not possible for all or any part of the finds archive, then provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration, analysis) as appropriate.
- 5.3 A report on the fieldwork and archive, consistent with the principles of *MAP2*, particularly Appendix 4, must be provided. The report must summarise the methodology employed, the stratigraphic sequence, and give a period by period description of the contexts recorded, and an inventory of finds. The objective account of the archaeological evidence must be clearly distinguished from its interpretation. The Report must include a discussion and an assessment of the archaeological evidence. Its conclusions must include a clear statement of the archaeological value of the results, and their significance in the context of the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology*, Occasional Papers 3 & 8, 1997 and 2000).
- 5.4 A summary report, in the established format, suitable for inclusion in the annual 'Archaeology in Suffolk' section of the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, should be prepared and included in the project report.

- 5.5 County Sites and Monuments Record sheets should be completed, as per the county SMR manual, for all sites where archaeological finds and/or features are located.
- 5.6 At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> must be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms.
- 5.7 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the SMR. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

Specification by: Keith Wade

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service Conservation Team
Environment and Transport Department
Shire Hall
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk IP33 2AR

Date: 11 February 2005

Reference: /Stowmarket-OldWaterworks02

This brief and specification remains valid for 12 months from the above date. If work is not carried out in full within that time this document will lapse; the authority should be notified and a revised brief and specification may be issued.

If the work defined by this brief forms a part of a programme of archaeological work required by a Planning Condition, the results must be considered by the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council, who have the responsibility for advising the appropriate Planning Authority.