

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE

Highfield Nursery, Ipswich (IPS 496), A Record of Archaeological Monitoring

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Reduced Level Strip

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Summary

Ipswich, Highfield Nursery, Chesterfield Drive (TM 1478 4658; IPS 496) Archaeological monitoring of the reduced level strip over the footprint of an extension to the existing buildings identified a single Roman feature, a small pit. The only other feature recorded was the northern side of a modern (early 20th century) extraction pit previously seen in the footings for an earlier extension. There was no evidence for the significant Roman building previously investigated by Basil Brown in c.1946 that was said to have been located on the northern edge of an extraction pit.
(Stuart Boulter for Suffolk County Council & V. A. Marriott Limited)

1. Introduction

1.1 Planning & Archaeological Background

Planning permission was granted (IP/05/00917/FPC) for the construction of an extension to the north side of Highfield Nursery in Chesterfield Drive, Ipswich (TM 1478 4658) (Fig. 1). A condition of the consent required that the applicant (Suffolk County Council) provide for a programme of archaeological works. A Brief and Specification document (Appendix I), written by Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service, Conservation Team deemed that the at the monitoring of

groundworks would provide the necessary level of archaeological recording.

The perceived archaeological potential for the site was based on its location on the eastern side of a known major Roman Villa complex (IPS 015). Work undertaken during the 19th and 20th centuries had exposed significant buildings, although the exact location of some of these excavations was somewhat dubious. However, part of a substantial building was recorded, by Basil Brown in 1946, in the immediate

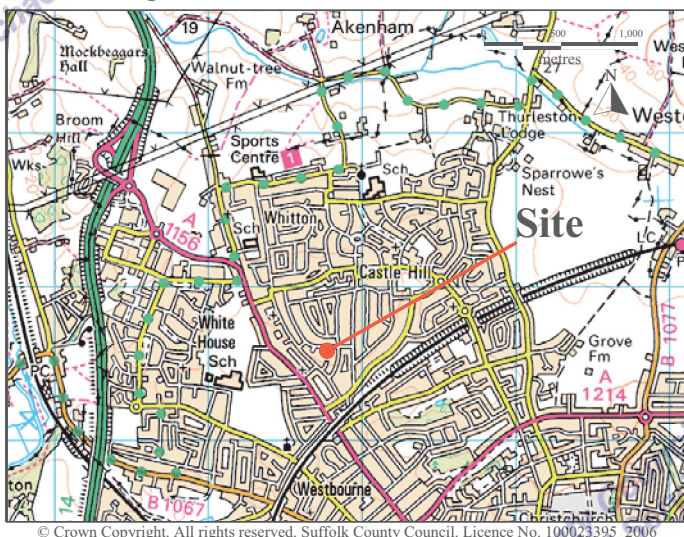


Fig. 1 1:50,000 scale OS map extract showing the location of the site

vicinity of the school, on the northern edge of an extraction pit.

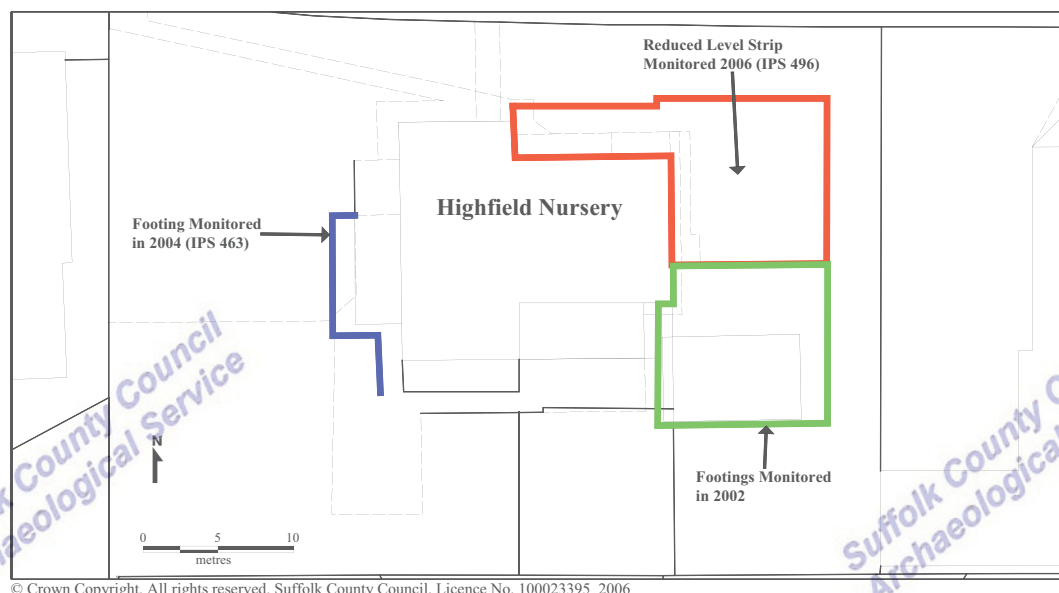


Fig. 2 1:500 scale OS map extract showing the areas covered by the three episodes of archaeological monitoring undertaken at Highfield Nursery

Two episodes of archaeological monitoring had previously been carried out by Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team as a result of previous construction works on the Nursery site (Fig. 2). In the first, undertaken in

2002 (SCCAS Rpt. No. 2002/134), the footings for an extension at the eastern end of the building were monitored. While no Roman finds or features were recovered, the edge of the extraction pit was recorded. The second monitoring was carried out in 2004 (IPS 463; SCCAS Rpt. No. 2004/136) and involved the inspection of a footing trench excavated for a wall associated with a new access ramp at the western end of the extant building. Roman archaeology was encountered at this juncture.

The proposed new extension lies immediately north of that constructed in 2002 and it was considered a possibility that the building recorded by Brown in 1946 could, if surviving later truncation and landscaping, be in this area.

Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team were subsequently commissioned, to undertake the archaeological monitoring, the fieldwork for which was completed in the second week of March 2006.

1.2 Topographical Setting & Drift Geology

The site lies to the north-west of Ipswich town centre on a south-west facing slope overlooking the valley of the River Gipping to the south and west. The river itself was 1.5 kilometres away from the site at its nearest point. The plot lies at approximately 33 metres OD, falling by about a metre from north to south within the site itself. It was unclear until the groundworks were undertaken whether this represented an entirely natural profile or was the result of truncation or landscaping.

The underlying drift geology comprises glaciogenic/periglacially-derived deposits comprising patchy mixed sands, gravel and clay.

2. Methodologies

2.1 Fieldwork

The Brief and Specification document (Appendix I) had suggested that two episodes of ground disturbance associated with the development would have archaeological implications; the provision of a temporary site access and the excavation of the footings themselves. However, following a site visit when the temporary access was being installed, it became clear that the most invasive work to be undertaken would be during the initial reduced level strip (in excess of 1 metre on the north side of the site). As a consequence it was decided to change the monitoring strategy and maintain a continuous presence during the reduced level strip. It would then not be necessary to monitor the footing trenches at all, as they were being cut from a level below which archaeological features would survive.

The soil-strip was carried out using a small, tracked 360° excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket for a good clean cut.

All features and their stratigraphic elements were allocated Context/OP (observed phenomena) numbers within a 'unique continuous numbering sequence' under the SMR code IPS 496.

The trench and their included archaeological features were recorded as a 1:50 scale plan in pencil on plastic drafting film.

Features, other than those which were clearly modern, were partially investigated with the excavated sections drawn at a scale of 1:20 on plastic drafting film.

All artefactual evidence recovered from the excavated sections was retained for dating purposes.

A full photographic record was made, both monochrome prints and digital shots.

2.2 Post-Excavation

All finds were processed (washed & marked), quantified and identified by in-house staff. The resulting information was input onto Microsoft Access97 database.

Contextual information was input onto Microsoft Access97 database (Appendix III).

The 1:50 scale site plans and 1:20 scale section drawings were inked on to plastic drafting film and are reproduced in this report at a scale of 1:200 (plans) and 1:20 (section & individual feature plan) as Fig's. 3 & 4 respectively.

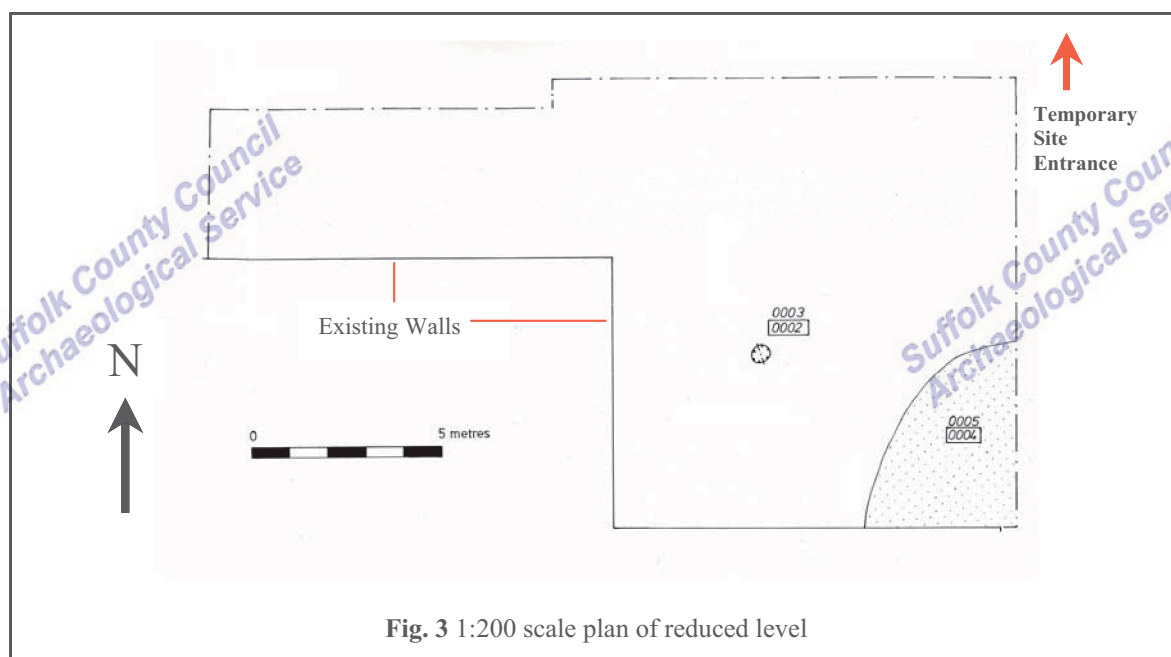
The photographic record has been incorporated into the Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service Photographic Archive which is held at Shire Hall, Bury St. Edmunds.

3. Results

3.1 Fieldwork

During an initial site visit it became clear that the provision for a temporary site access and hard standing would have no archaeological implications as only a thin (10 centimetres thick) layer of turf and topsoil was being removed.

Due to constraints caused by the constricted area of the site, the soil-strip was carried out by working back towards the entrance in the north-east corner of the site, pulling the spoil from south to north and west to east (Fig. 3). While the topsoil and subsoil were removed sequentially in each pull, it was never going to be possible to remove all of the topsoil in one go.



At the southernmost limit of the stripped area, adjacent to the standing building, the formation level coincided with the level of the naturally occurring sandy clay subsoil at approximately 0.45 metres below the existing ground level. However, to maintain this formation level towards the north, the naturally occurring clay subsoil was progressively truncated to a maximum depth of c.1.3 metres on the south side of the strip.

The soil profile appeared to be intact, suggesting that this particular area had not been subjected to previous truncation or landscaping.

With the exception of modern service trenches associated with the existing buildings (not shown on the plan), only two archaeological features were identified during the soil-strip (Fig. 3).

The first, a circular pit (0002) contained a significant quantity of Roman tile and fragments of septaria and was almost certainly Roman in date (Fig. 4 & Plate 1). This feature was considered to provide evidence for the intact nature of the overall site. The pit was small, measuring 0.4 metres in diameter with a depth of c.0.2 metres and a grey clayey loam fill. A significant quantity of Roman tile and septaria fragments were present. If these had been found within a post-hole, they would be considered to represent deliberate packing around the post. However, the feature was totally isolated and cannot, therefore, really be interpreted as a post-hole with any degree of confidence. Septaria is a local building stone found in the London Clay and was certainly used in the rubble walls of the villa buildings excavated to the west of the Highfield Nursery site.

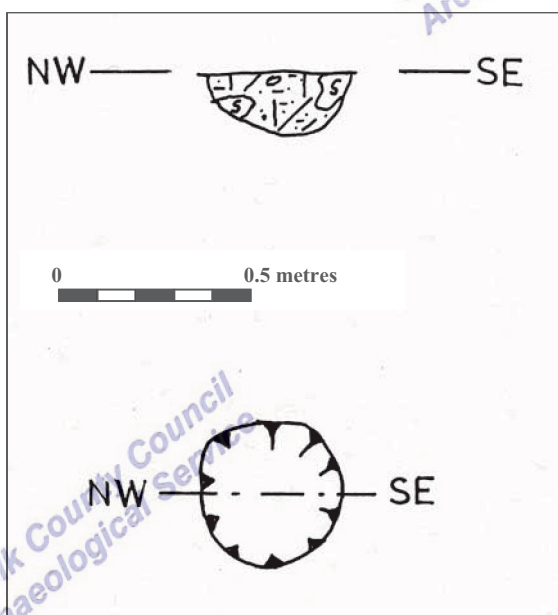


Fig. 4 1:20 scale section drawing & plan of pit 0002



Plate 1 Pit 0002

A second feature (0004) was identified in the south-east corner of the site. This was clearly an extensive intervention of modern (filled during the 20th century) date

and could be seen to cut through to the surface of the site. The feature continued on below the formation level for the new building and its depth was not ascertained. The stratified clay, sand and loam fill (0005) contained domestic rubbish (bottles, tins etc.) and was interpreted as the continuation of the known pit seen on the early OS maps and in the 2002 monitoring of the previous extension.

3.2 The Finds (by Richenda Goffin)

Introduction

Finds were collected from a single context, as shown in Table 1.

Context	CBM		Stone		Spotdate
	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	
0003	8	688	1	190	Roman
Total	8	688	1	190	

Table 1 IPS 496: Finds Quantities

Ceramic building material

Eight fragments of ceramic brick and tile were recovered from the circular pit 0003. Although a piece of tegula and an imbrex were identified, the remaining fragments were featureless and were classified under the general term of 'Roman brick and tile'. These were in a range of well-made fine and medium sandy fabrics which were orange, dark orange and pale brown in colour. An additional semi-vitrified fragment of tile may be later in date.

Stone

A single sample of septaria was recovered from the same context 0003. This type of local calcareous marly stone was used in the construction of Roman walls in the region, (for example, the town wall at Colchester), (Crummy 1997). It has also been identified as being a component of the walls of the nearby villa.

Discussion

The fragments of brick, tile and stone recovered from the infilling of feature 0003 are likely to represent demolition material from the nearby villa complex west of the site.

4. Conclusions

The archaeological monitoring provided evidence to suggest that the majority of the footprint for the extension lay within an intact area of ground with the only evidence for disruption being the known pit in the south-east corner. While this did not conform exactly to its location as shown on the early OS maps, it was close enough to confirm it as the same feature. However, this does bring into some doubt the location of Basil Brown's significant building described as being on the northern edge of the pit.

The presence of one Roman feature indicates that the site was in the overall area influenced by the villa, but was clearly divorced from the main buildings. The absence of any unstratified Roman material was also indicative of a more peripheral location.

5. Bibliography

Crummy, P., 1997, City of Victory

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM



Appendix I *Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring of Development*

HIGHFIELD NURSERY, CHESTERFIELD DRIVE, IPSWICH

Although this document is fundamental to the work of the specialist archaeological contractor the developer should be aware that certain of its requirements are likely to impinge upon the working practices of a general building contractor and may have financial implications, for example see paragraphs 2.3 & 4.3.

1. Background

- 1.1 Planning permission to build an extension on this site has been granted conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (application IP/05/00917/FPC). Assessment of the available archaeological evidence indicates that the area affected by development can be adequately recorded by archaeological monitoring.

- 1.2 The development area lies at TM 147 465 on a south facing slope between 30 and 35m OD. It is on the eastern side of a large Roman villa complex (IPS 015), parts of which have been exposed in the 19th and 20th centuries. The immediate area of the school produced evidence of part of a substantial building in c.1946 (IPS 204, investigated by B Brown) on the north side of an extraction pit; the extraction pit is shown on early OS maps and was identified in monitoring of the extension on the south-east corner of the school (SCCAS Report 2002/134). It is thus very likely that the building fragment recorded by B Brown is, or was, in the area of the new extension on the north-east corner of the school. Recent work at the west end (IPS 463, report 2004/136) identified surviving Roman deposits including a possible burnt timber/daub wall trench (note that a burnt early phase was also located in Time Team project to the north). However, a watching brief on the entrance porch, and the change in level with Chesterfield Drive, may indicate modern truncation of at least part of the northern area of the school plot. The Time Team project also indicated that B Brown's excavations resulted in large areas of disturbed deposits containing Roman building debris, but that these trenches sometimes overlay *in situ* material and could still show the position of his, sometimes poorly located, site plans.

This area has also produced evidence for Neolithic activity (IPS 015, IPS 200) and for Anglo-Saxon settlement (IPS 015, 099, 200).

- 1.3 In accordance with the standards and guidance produced by the Institute of Field Archaeologists this brief should not be considered sufficient to enable the total execution of the project. A Project Design or Written Scheme of Investigation (PD/WSI) based upon this brief and the accompanying outline specification of minimum requirements, is an essential requirement. This must be submitted by the developers, or their agent, to the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR; telephone/fax: 01284 352443) for approval. The work must not commence until this office has approved both the archaeological contractor as suitable to undertake the work, and the PD/WSI as satisfactory. The PD/WSI will *provide the basis for measurable standards* and will be used to establish whether the requirements of the planning condition will be adequately met.
- 1.4 Detailed standards, information and advice to supplement this brief are to be found in “Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England” Occasional Papers 14, East Anglian Archaeology, 2003.

2. **Brief for Archaeological Monitoring**

- 2.1 To provide a record of archaeological deposits which are 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 earlier occupation of the site, particularly in the Roman period.
- 2.3 The significant archaeologically damaging activities in this proposal are likely to be the site preparation works involving topsoil stripping (specifically, the construction of a temporary access, any hard standing construction, and landscaping) and the excavation of building footing trenches.

If site preparation works involve topsoil stripping the stripping process and the upcast soil are to be observed whilst they are excavated by the building contractor.

In the case of footing trenches the excavation and the upcast soil, are to be observed whilst they are excavated by the building contractor. Adequate time is to be allowed for the recording of archaeological deposits during excavation, and of soil sections following excavation (see 4.3).

3. **Arrangements for Monitoring**

- 3.1 To carry out the monitoring work the developer will appoint an archaeologist (the archaeological contractor) who must be approved by the Conservation Team of Suffolk County Council’s Archaeological Service (SCCAS) - see 1.3 above.

- 3.2 The developer or his archaeologist will give the Conservation Team of SCCAS five working days notice of the commencement of ground works on the site, in order that the work of the archaeological contractor may be monitored.
- 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 time-table.
- 3.4 If unexpected remains are encountered the Conservation Team of SCCAS must be informed immediately. Amendments to this specification may be made to ensure adequate provision for archaeological recording.

4. **Specification**

- 4.1 The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to both the County Council Conservation Team archaeologist and the contracted 'observing archaeologist' to allow archaeological observation of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.
- 4.2 Opportunity must 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 soil stripping for site access, and any hard standings or landscaping unimpeded access to the stripped area for up to one day must be allowed for archaeological recording at the interface between topsoil and any archaeological deposits before the area is further deepened, traversed by machinery or sub-base deposited.

Excavation of footing trenches must be under archaeological supervision; if deposits indicating Roman walls/robbed wall trenches/floors are identified during excavation, up to five hours unimpeded access should be allowed at an intermediate level. Following excavation of the footing trenches unimpeded access at the rate of two 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 must be planned at a minimum scale of 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development.
- 4.5 All contexts must be numbered and finds recorded by context. The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Sites and Monuments Record.

- 4.6 Developers should be aware of the possibility of human burials being found. If this eventuality occurs they must comply with the provisions of Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857; and the archaeologist should be informed by 'Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England' (English Heritage & the Church of England 2005) which includes sensible baseline standards which are likely to apply whatever the location, age or denomination of a burial.

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*, must be prepared and included in the project report.
- 5.5 County Sites and Monuments Record sheets must 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: Judith Plouviez

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

Date: 19 December 2005

Reference: Ipswich-HighfieldNursery12

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.

Appendix II Highfield Nursey, Chesterfield Drive, Ipswich, Method Statement for Archaeological Monitoring

1.0 Background

1.1 Planning permission was granted for the construction of an extension and temporary access provision at Highfield Nursery conditional on the completion of an acceptable programme of archaeological works.

1.2 The site lies to towards the eastern end of a known Roman villa complex investigated primarily by Basil Brown in the mid 20th century, although other excavations have been undertaken.

1.3 It is unclear whether intact archaeological deposits survive within the proposed development area as these may have been destroyed by earlier ground disturbances.

1.4 Two significantly archaeologically damaging activities have been identified: the provision of a temporary access and hard standing and the excavation of strip foundations.

1.5 Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service Conservation Team, in their role as Archaeological Planning Advisors to the Local Planning Authority, have stated in the Brief and Specification document that any archaeological deposits that will be disturbed by the project can be adequately recorded by monitoring of groundworks.

2.0 Fieldwork Methodology

2.1 Monitoring will be undertaken by Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service Field Project Team (hereafter SCCASFPT) adhering to the requirements of the Brief and Specification document.

2.2 The on site contractors will be required to contact SCCASFPT in advance (c.5 working days) of the initiation of groundworks activities in order to arrange for the presence of an archaeologist.

The Brief and Specification requires that an archaeologist is present during the soil-stripping operations, both for the access and subsequent strip foundations, and that time will be allowed for the manual excavation of any features revealed (B & S, 2.3).

Manual excavation will be undertaken to the standards outlined in the Brief and Specification using techniques and methods detailed in *Guidelines and Policies for Archaeological Work In Suffolk* (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, 2002) (copy available on request).

2.3 Prior to the start of the fieldwork, an Oasis online record will be created with key fields being completed. Other fields will be filled as and when information becomes available.

3.0 Health & Safety Considerations (including EMS)

3.1 General Health and Safety

The Archaeological Monitoring will be carried out while adhering to the Suffolk County Council statement on health and safety (copy available on request) and fully complying with health and safety policies of other contractors that are operating on the site at that time.

Suffolk County Council has been approved by Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance to the following Environmental Management System Standard (BS EN ISO 14001:1996).

Particular attention will be given to the following points which are deemed particularly relevant to this site.

- **Insurance:** Site staff and official visitors are covered by Suffolk County Council insurance policies (copy available on request).
- **Working in an isolated setting:** A fully charged mobile phone will be available at all times. Site staff will be made aware of the location of the nearest hospital casualty department and a van will always be available for transport purposes. At least one of the site staff will be a qualified First Aider and a fully maintained first aid kit is kept in the van.
- **Working within close proximity to mechanical plant:** Hard hats, ear protectors, high visibility vests and protective footwear will be worn at all times.
- **Extremes of weather:** Site staff will be issued with waterproof clothing and made aware of the dangers of extreme temperature. The van will be available for shelter should conditions become unworkable.
- **Deep excavations:** Should the archaeological investigations involve the excavation of deep holes/trenches, battered or stepped sides may be deemed necessary.
- **Toilets/washing facilities:** Washing facilities and toilets will be available on site.

3.2 Contaminated ground

There is no prior knowledge of contaminated ground on the site.

Should contamination be identified during the works, any necessary measures will be taken using *Protection of Workers and the General Public During Development of Contaminated Land* (HSE, 1991) as a guide.

4.0 Post-Excavation Methodology

All plans and sections will be inked on plastic drafting film

A computer database will be made of all archaeological records.

All finds will be processed, listed, identified and, where necessary, conserved.

The results of the monitoring will be incorporated into an Archive/Assessment report that is consistent with *Management of Archaeological Projects* (MAP 2) and will be used to inform whether there is any need for further analysis and reporting (publication).

Deposition of the archive will be made within the county SMR (Sites & Monuments Record) within 3 months of the end of the monitoring.

Stuart Boulter
Field Projects Team
Archaeological Service
Environment & Transport Dept.
Suffolk County Council
February 2006

Appendix III IPS 496: Context List and Descriptions

OPNO	CONTEXT	COMPONENT	GRIDS	IDENTIFIER	DESCRIPTION	CUTS	OVER	CUTBY	UNDER	PERIOD/PHASE
0001	0001	0001		U/S Finds	Unstratified finds from the whole site					
0002	0002	0002		Pit (Cut)	Small circular pit					Roman
0003	0002	0002		Pit (Fill)	Dark grey loamy clay with frequent Roman tile and fragments of septaria					Roman
0004	0004	0004		Pit (Cut)	Large extraction pit, known from early OS maps					P-med
0005	0004	0004		Pit (Fill)	Stratified fill of 0004, loam, clay sand with domestic rubbish					P-med