

7-9 RUSSELL ROAD, IPSWICH

IPS 498

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Planning Application No: IP/04/01012/FUL
Grid reference: TM 1560 4410

Date of Fieldwork: May – June 2005
Funding Body: Mars Pension Trustees Limited

Introduction

A Planning Application (IP/04/01012/FUL) has been granted for the construction of a six-storey building at 7-9 Russell Road, Ipswich. The site is centred approximately on TM 1560 4410 and lies on generally level ground at *c.* 2.7m AOD. It encompasses a total area of *c.* 8700m². The site is bounded to the north by Russell Road, to the east by the Ipswich Crown Court, to the south by West End Road and to the west by further large-scale development (Gipping House).

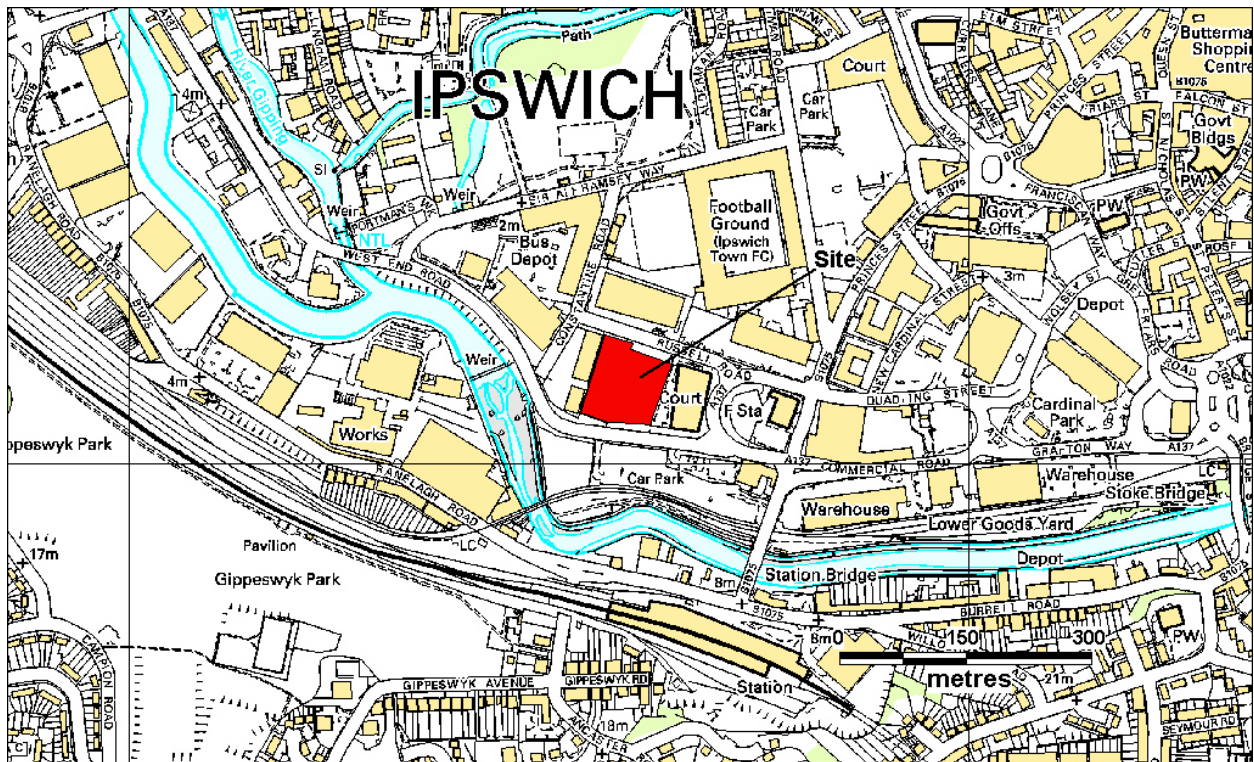


Figure 1. Site location

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The site lies in the area of the former Town Marsh and observations at other nearby sites have shown that it lies in an area with significant potential for the preservation of prehistoric deposits. The following prehistoric entries are found in the County SMR:

- **IPS 073.** Iron Age comb; found at the corner of Princes Street and Quadling Street *c.* 250m to the east.
- **IPS 150.** Palaeolithic flint blade; found in the area of the Bus Depot *c.* 210m to the north-west.
- **IPS 148 and 149.** Prehistoric mammal bones found at the bus depot (IPS 148) and the southern end of Constantine Road.

As the development involved significant ground disturbance that have the potential to damage archaeological deposits the Planning Application included a condition requiring a programme of archaeological works prior to commencement of the development.

A Brief and Specification (dated 13/01/05) was produced by Keith Wade of the SCCAS Conservation Team, which required archaeological monitoring of the groundworks and drainage excavations. The SCCAS Field Team were subsequently commissioned to carry out the works by Stace Project Management Ltd., on behalf of their client Mars Pension Trustees Limited.

Methodology

A number of visits were made throughout May and June 2005 to observe the excavation of test pits, a lift pit and drainage runs.

All observations were made after the interventions had been excavated, so some hand cleaning of the upstanding sections and test pit bases were required to further clarify the nature of the deposits and locate incised features.

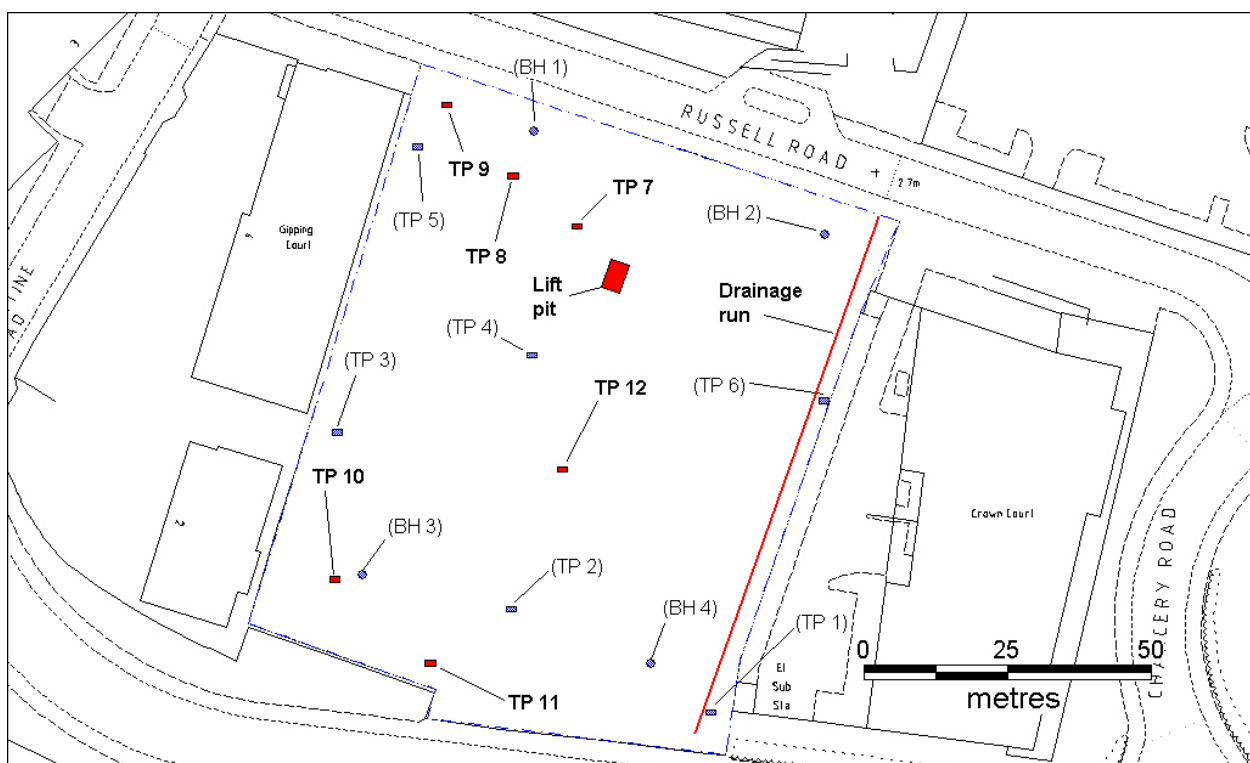


Figure 2. Location of monitored groundworks and unobserved test pits

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The site was allocated the SMR number IPS 498 and observed archaeological features and deposits were allocated OP (observable phenomena) numbers and recorded on *pro forma* context sheets. Context records were entered onto an Access97 database. A photographic record of the deposits was made throughout.

Results

Test Pit 7

This measured 0.6m wide (N-S) by 3m long (E-W). The following stratigraphy was observed:

Context	Depth	Description
0002	0.00 – 1.1m	Undifferentiated overburden. Very mixed loam with occasional CBM fragments and pockets of sand.
0003	1.1m+	Natural drift. River terrace deposits - brownish yellowish orange slightly clayey sand and gravel.

No archaeological features or finds were observed.

Test Pit 8

This was also aligned north to south and was *c.* 4m long by 0.6m wide. The following stratigraphy was recorded:

Context	Depth	Description
0002	0.00 – 0.8m	Undifferentiated overburden. Very mixed loam with occasional modern rubble/CBM fragments.
0003	0.8m+	Natural drift. River terrace deposits - brownish yellowish orange slightly clayey sand and gravel.

A single large cut feature was partially revealed at the northern end of the test pit. This contained two fills, a primary fill of homogenous sands and gravels and an upper fill of topsoil-like loam. No dateable finds were recovered. The general appearance and nature of its relatively un-compacted upper fill suggested it was of modern origins.

Test Pit 9

Orientated south-east to north-west this was 0.6m wide and 4m long. The following stratigraphy was recorded:

Context	Depth	Description
0002	0.00 – 0.3m	Undifferentiated overburden. Very mixed loam with occasional modern rubble/CBM fragments. Notable root disturbance in this case.
0003	0.3m+	Natural drift. River terrace deposits - brownish yellowish orange slightly clayey sand and gravel.

A small pit was partially revealed in the south-eastern part of this test pit. The single fill of this feature contained notable amounts of brick fragments and CBM-flecked sand pockets, again suggesting modern origins.

Test Pit 10

This was 4m long and 0.6m wide and was aligned east to west. The following stratigraphy was recorded:

Context	Depth	Description
0002	0.00 – 0.3m	Undifferentiated overburden. Very mixed loam with occasional modern rubble/CBM fragments. Notable root disturbance in this case.
0003	0.3m+	Natural drift. River terrace deposits - brownish yellowish orange slightly clayey sand and gravel.

A single pit was partially revealed at the western end of this trial pit. Its dimensions in plan could not be determined, but it was 1.2m deep. No dateable finds were recovered from its fill, but the presence of brick and tile fragments again suggest a post-medieval or modern date.

Test Pit 11

This was aligned north-east to south-west and was again 0.6m wide and 4m long. The following stratigraphy was recorded:

Context	Depth	Description
0002	0.00 – 0.3m	Undifferentiated overburden. Very mixed loam with occasional modern rubble/CBM fragments. Notable root disturbance in this case.
0003	0.3m+	Natural drift. River terrace deposits - brownish yellowish orange slightly clayey sand and gravel.

No archaeological finds or features were recorded.

Test Pit 12

This example was also 0.6m wide and 4m long and was aligned north to south. The following stratigraphy was recorded:

Context	Depth	Description
0002	0.00 – 0.3m	Undifferentiated overburden. Very mixed loam with occasional modern rubble/CBM fragments. Notable root disturbance in this case.
0004	0.3 – 1.7m	?Feature fill. Brown silty sandy loam. Interpreted as the fill of a feature that occupied the whole of test pit 12.
0003	1.7m+	Natural drift. River terrace deposits - brownish yellowish orange slightly clayey sand and gravel.

A 1.4m thick deposit with moderate modern brick and tile inclusions occupied the whole of this test pit. The most likely interpretation is that the test pit was excavated within a large modern feature whose edges could not be identified.

Eastern Drainage Run

This crossed the whole of the site, extending from its northern to southern boundaries along the eastern edge of the site. It was not a deep trench, with excavation ceasing at 0.5m bgl. This revealed only made ground of similar character to context 0002, as described above.

Lift Pit

Unfortunately the base of this had already been blanked with reinforced concrete on the date of the visit (26/06/05). As a result only the upstanding sections were available for recording.

Only 0.3m of potentially ‘archaeological’ deposits were observed, the remaining depth of the intervention cut through various natural deposits to at least 2.1m bgl. The uppermost 0.3m of observed section was occupied by a piling mat. The following sequence of deposits was recorded:

Context	Depth	Description
0005	0.3 – 0.6m	?Garden/agricultural soil. Soft mid to dark greyish brown clayey silty sand with frequent small to medium sub-angular to sub-rounded flint pebbles. Rare modern CBM fragments and clay pipe fragments.
0006	0.6 – 1m	Natural drift. Loose light yellowish brown fine sand matrix with very frequent small angular/sub-angular flint shingle/pebbles.
0007	1 – 1.5m	Natural drift. Soft mid brown/orange very fine slightly clayey sand.
0008	1.5 – 1.75m	Natural drift. Terrace gravels – loose mid brown sharp sand matrix with frequent poorly sorted small to medium sub-rounded flint pebbles.
0009	1.75 – 2.1m+	Natural drift. Very soft light yellowish brown medium to coarse sands with few notable inclusions.

No archaeological finds or features were observed.

Conclusions

Several features were partially revealed but have all been interpreted as having post-medieval or modern origins.

It was particularly difficult in this case to ascertain what the archaeological ground levels would have been and seems likely that some terracing/levelling of the site had taken place prior to the

present development. The depth of the natural river terrace gravel deposits was highly variable, as summarised in Figure 3.

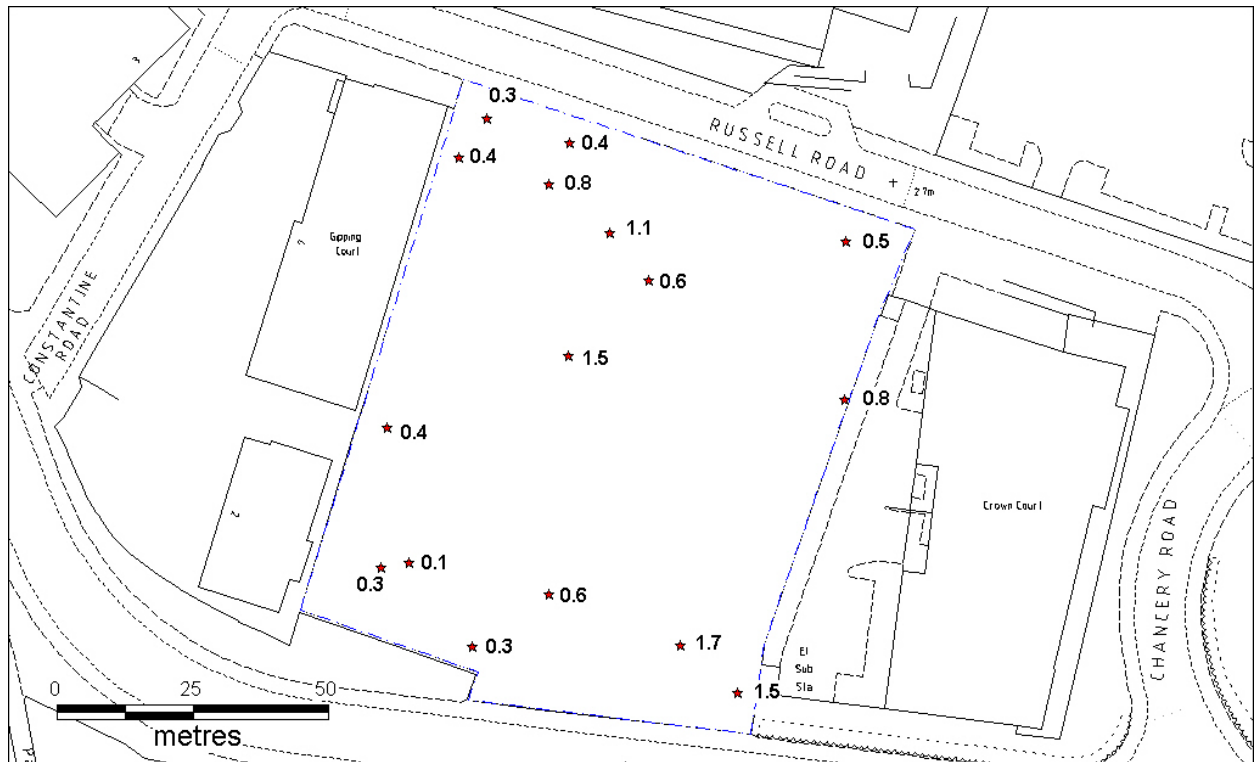


Figure 3. Depth to natural deposits (below existing ground level).

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The presence of alluvial deposits in the Site Investigation report in the south-eastern part of the site is notable. It suggests that, at least in places, deposits related to the former Town Marsh still survive within the site. It seems likely that given the site’s topographical setting such deposits would have once occupied the majority of the area, but have since been truncated by previous modern developments.

No pre-modern archaeological features, deposits or finds were encountered.