

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE

Former NCP Car Park, St. George's Street, Ipswich
(IPS 502, IAS 7017)

Record of an Archaeological Evaluation

SCCAS Report No. 2006/153; Oasis No. suffolkc1-17650



Evaluation in progress

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● September 2006

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List of Contents	
List of Figures	
List of Plates	
List of Tables	
List of Appendices	
Summary	ii
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Planning, Historical & Archaeological Background	1
1.2 Topographical Setting & Drift Geology	2
2. Methodologies	2
2.1 Fieldwork	
2.2 Post-Excavation	3
3. Results	3
3.1 Fieldwork	3
3.2 The Finds (by Richenda Goffin)	8
4. Archaeological Interpretation	9
5. Archaeological Potential of the Site & Recommendations for Further Archaeological Work	9
6. References	10

List of Figures

Fig. 1	1:10,000 scale OS map extract showing the location of the site & previously recorded archaeology	1
Fig. 2	c.1:700 scale OS map extract showing the location of the trial-trenches & relevant levels	3
Fig. 3	1:50 scale plan & section drawings of Trench 1	4
Fig. 4	1:50 scale plan & section drawings of Trench 2	6
Fig. 5	1:50 section drawing of Trench 3	7

List of Plates

Cover:	View of Trial-Trench 1	
Plate 1:	Trench 1	5
Plate 2:	Trench 2	5
Plate 3:	Trench 3	7
Plate 4:	Trench 4	7

List of Tables

Table 1	Finds quantification by context	8
Table 2	Pottery quantification by fabric	8

List of Appendices

Appendix I	IPS 502; Context List & Descriptions	
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Summary

Former NCP Car Park, St. George's Street, Ipswich (TM 1600 4485; IPS 502; IAS 7017) A trial-trenching evaluation of the site has provided evidence regarding the natural topography of the site and the surviving archaeological deposits.

The existing level floor surface in the standing building has been attained by a combination of truncation, towards the north end of the site, and building up to the south.

Archaeological features were recorded in two of the trial-trenches. A ditch in a trench located towards the eastern end of the site was parallel to the existing road (St George St.) and was found to cut a pit. The pit included 10th/11th century pottery in its fill.

One of the trenches towards the southern edge of the site, in an area where the site had been made up to the existing level, had two pits cut into its base, the larger of which included medieval (12th-14th century) pottery in its fill.

The evaluation has confirmed that there is potential for archaeological deposits to survive intact over the majority of the site with truncation limited to the northern end. The archaeological features encountered were consistent with the known historical facts and comprise occupation deposits dating from the Late Saxon and medieval periods.

(Stuart Boulter for Suffolk County Council & SHE Developments Ltd & David Wilson Homes Eastern)

1. Introduction

1.1 Planning, Historical & Archaeological Background

A planning application (IP/03/01068) has been submitted for a residential development on the site of the former NCP car park located on the corner of St. George's Street and Bedford Street, Ipswich (TM 1600 4485) (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 1:25,000 & 1:888 scale OS map extracts showing the location of the site & previously recorded archaeology

A condition of the planning consent required that the applicant provide for a programme of archaeological works which, in the first instance, involved an archaeological trenching evaluation in order to assess the character, extent and condition of the archaeological deposits. The results of the evaluation would then be used to inform the need for further archaeological works should the development proceed in its current form.

The archaeological evaluation work was undertaken conforming to a verbal brief from the Local Authority's planning advisor (Keith Wade of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service Conservation Team). A Specification document was also prepared by Steven Weaver of CgMs Consulting on behalf of their client, the prospective purchaser of the site, David Wilson Homes.

The site itself lies in one of Ipswich's medieval suburbs, St. George's, to the north-west of the town's defences. A chapel dedicated to St. George stood some 50 metres to the north of the development. The building had a round tower, the only one in Ipswich, and was late 11th or 12th century in date. Excavations undertaken on the eastern side of St. George's Street by Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service in 1883 (IPS 165 on Fig. 1) revealed pits and property boundaries of Late Saxon and medieval date. Another SMR entry dated to 1963 (IPS 161, 10-12 St. Matthews Street) describes a east to west aligned skeleton recorded at a depth of four to five feet at a location immediately to the south of the proposed development site (Fig. 1). The only other entry within the immediate vicinity is IPS 159 (4 St

Matthews Street) describing medieval masonry of 14th or 15th century date, probably from a chapel, that had been built into a wall (Fig. 1).

The fieldwork for the archaeological evaluation was carried out on the 4th, 5th and 6th of September 2006.

1.2 Topographical Setting & Drift Geology

The site lies on a south-facing slope on the north side of the valley of the River Gipping at approximately 17 metres OD. The underlying drift geology is difficult to determine as the site lies close to the boundary between glaciogenic deposits (sands, gravels & clay) to the north and alluvial deposits (sands & gravels) to the south. On balance, however, the natural occurring subsoil as seen in the trial-trenches was more consistent with a glacial derivation rather than alluvial.

2. Methodologies

2.1 Fieldwork

A Sites and Monuments Record code (IPS 502) was allocated to the site with all features and their stratigraphic components given '*Unique Continuous Observed Phenomena*' numbers under this code. In addition, an Ipswich Archaeological Survey code (IAS 7017) was also allocated.

The general location for the four 2 metres by 2 metres trial-trenches was agreed with the archaeological planning advisor (Keith Wade), with the exact position determined on site by factors such as the location of drains and the existing joints in the concrete slab.

The concrete slab was initially breached using a floor cutter in order to ensure that the edges of the holes were neat and straight. A hydraulic breaker attached to the mechanical excavator was then used to disrupt the slab over the area of the trenches.

After removal of the concrete slab and CAT survey for services, excavation was undertaken using a 360° mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.3 metres wide toothless ditching bucket to give a good clean cut.

All features located within the base of the trenches were manually cleaned to improve their definition prior to excavation and recording.

Finds recovered during the excavation were all retained for dating purposes.

Plans of the trenches and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20 in pencil on plastic drafting film.

A metal detector search was undertaken at all stages of the project.

A comprehensive levelling survey was carried out and related directly to Mean Ordnance Datum from a known spot height of 17.4 metres in the middle of St. George's Street opposite Bedford Street (Fig. 2).

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

After recording, the trenches were backfilled with the loose overburden material, while the broken slab was off-sited in a skip.

2.2 Post-Excavation

Finds were processed (washed & marked) before being quantified and identified and the resulting information input onto Microsoft Access database.

Context information was input onto Microsoft Access database (Appendix I).

Plans and section drawings were inked to form part of the archive and are reproduced at a scale of 1:50 in this report as Figures 2 to 4.

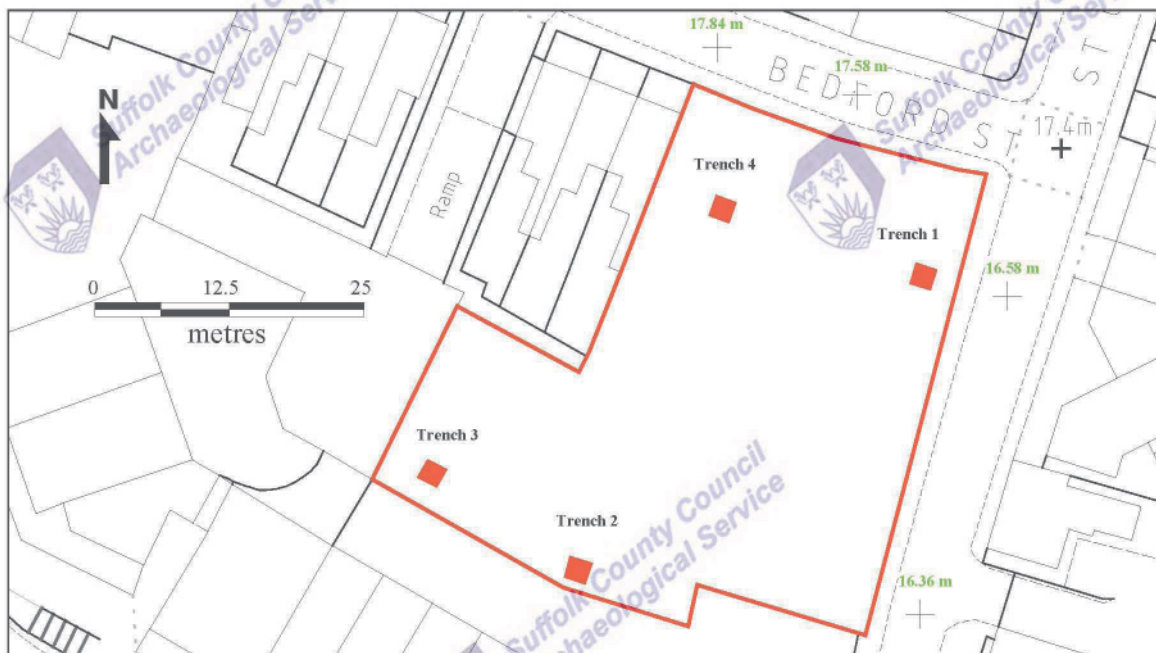
The results of the evaluation (stratigraphic information, levelling record & finds data) have been incorporated into a report (this document) which includes an assessment of the archaeological potential of the site, the likely impact of the proposed development and recommendations for further archaeological work.

Photographs were added to Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service Photographic Archive that is held at Shire Hall, Bury St. Edmunds.

3. Results

3.1 Fieldwork

Levels were taken at intervals along the centreline of St. George's Street and Bedford Street as these were considered to reflect the overall topographical trend (Fig. 2). The levels show that the ground effectively rises from the south to north in excess of a metre over the length of the building. Given that the existing floor of the building only varies in level by 9 centimetres, then there has clearly been some major landscaping involved during its construction. The evidence from the trenches, which will be discussed later, confirms this assertion, showing that the southern end of the site had been built up while the northern end had been incised into the slope.



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Fig. 2 c. 1:700 scale OS map extract showing the location of the trial-trenches & relevant levels

Trench 1

Relevant Levels:

- Existing floor surface 17.34 m OD
- Naturally occurring subsoil c.17.04 m OD
- Centre of St. George's Street adjacent to Trench 16.58 m OD

Trench 1 was located towards the north-east corner of the site close to the St. George's Street frontage (Fig. 2). The composite concrete slab (0014) was collectively c.0.17 metres thick overlying a 0.1 to 0.2 metre thick layer of mixed loam and sand with occasional brick rubble (0015) (Fig. 3). Naturally occurring stony, clayey sand subsoil was encountered at 0.30 to 0.35 metres below the existing floor surface.

Three features were recorded in Trench 1; a probable ditch (0002), a pit (0004) and a bore-hole (0016) (Fig. 2).

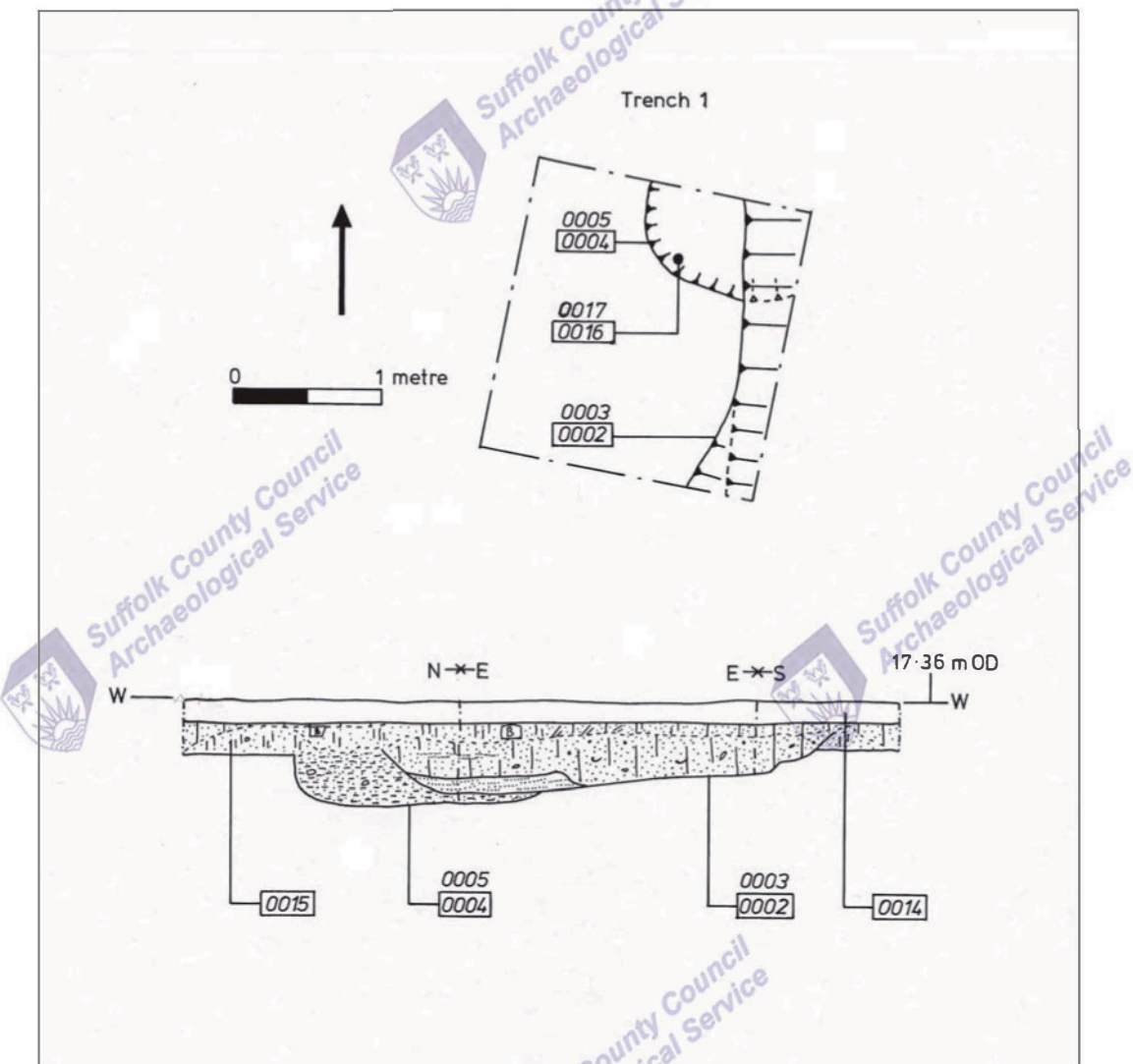


Fig. 3 1:50 scale plan & section drawings of Trench 1

Linear feature 0002 was orientated north-north-east to south-south-west down the eastern edge of the trench (Fig. 3). While it is likely that this feature was a ditch, the



Plate 1: Trench 1

limited dimensions of the excavated trench mean that this interpretation is by no means certain. With a maximum depth in the trench of 0.3 metres and an indeterminate width, feature 0002 could clearly be seen to cut pit 0004.

The fill (0003) comprised relatively homogenous dark brown loam with a localised, laminated fine sand component towards its base. No artefactual evidence was recovered

from the feature, although flecks of oyster shell were noted in the section.

Pit 0004 was located on the north side of and continuing under the edge of the trench (Fig. 3). Although having a measurable depth of 0.35 metres, the overall size and shape of the pit could not be ascertained within the confines of the trench. The fill (0005) comprised homogenous silty brown sand with occasional stones. Artefactual evidence included 10th/11th century pottery and fragments of animal bone (see section 3.2).

A bore-hole (0016) with a fill (0017) of light grey coloured silty clay was seen cutting the bottom of pit 0004.

Trench 2

Relevant Levels:

- Existing floor surface
- Naturally occurring subsoil

17.28 m OD

16.03 m OD

Trench 2 was located close to the centre of the southern edge of the site (Fig. 2). At this juncture, the concrete slab (0032) was 0.1 to 0.15 metres thick lying on 0.1 to 0.2 metres of rubble hardcore (0031). Below the surface layers a stratified deposit of loam, sand, lime mortar was recorded with a thickness varying between 0.6 and 0.8 metres (0027, 0028, 0029, 0030 & 0033) (Fig. 4). These layers incorporated brick rubble and a dump of broken 'cod' bottles which suggests a relatively recent date for



Plate 2: Trench 2

their deposition. These upper layers sealed a 0.3 to 0.45 metre thick layer of homogenous brown loam (0026) at the base of the trench, which in turn immediately overlay naturally occurring sand and gravel subsoil.

Two incised features were recorded beneath layer 0026; pits 0022 and 0024 (Fig. 4).

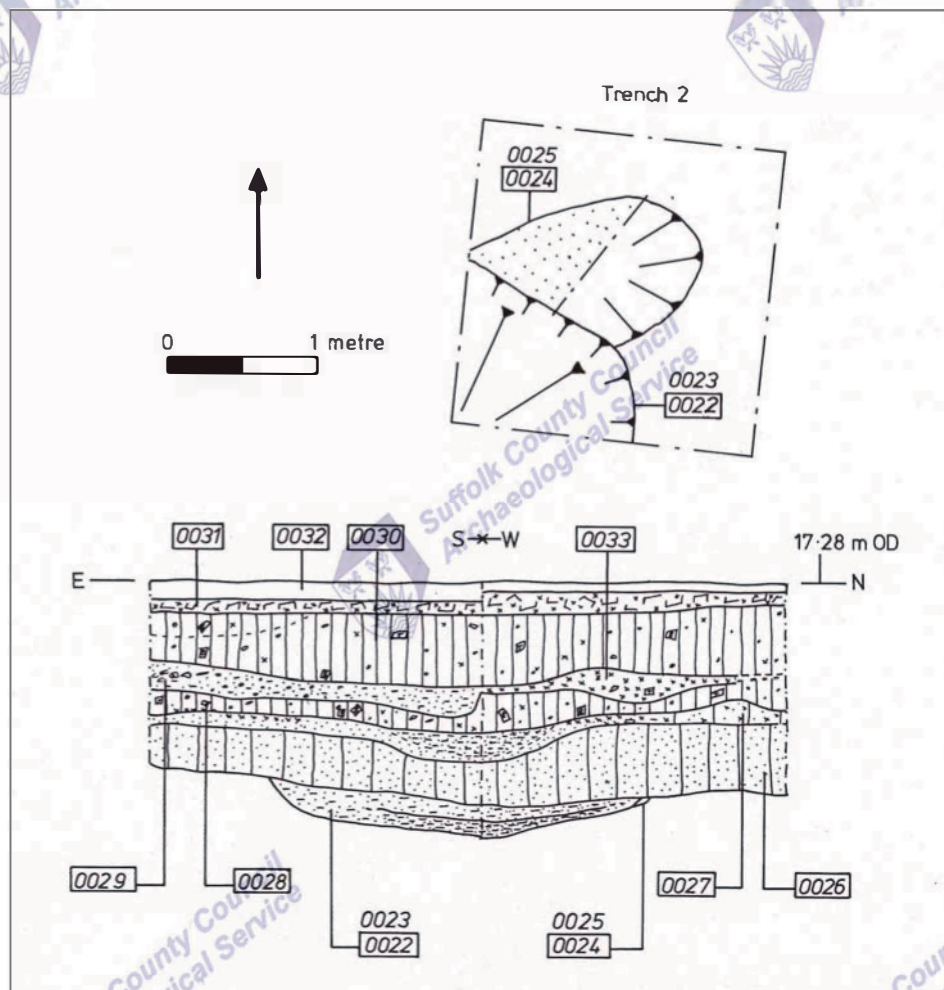


Fig. 4 1:50 scale plan & section drawings of Trench 2

Pit 0022 was located on the south side of the trench, continuing under its edge. With a measured depth of 0.2 metres, its other dimensions were indeterminate within the confines of the trench. Stratigraphically, pit 0022 clearly cut pit 0024 (Fig. 4). The fill (0023) comprised homogenous brown silty sand, darkening slightly towards its base. The artefactual evidence recovered from the excavated fill included medieval, 12th-14th century, pottery and fragments of animal bone.

Trench 3

Relevant Levels:

- Existing floor surface 17.37 m OD
- Naturally occurring subsoil 16.32 m OD

Trench 3 was located towards the south-west corner of the site (Fig. 2). Here the concrete slab (0013) was found to be 0.1 metres thick and overlying a further 0.1 metres of rubble and clinker hardcore (0012) (Fig. 5). Below these surface layers 0.7

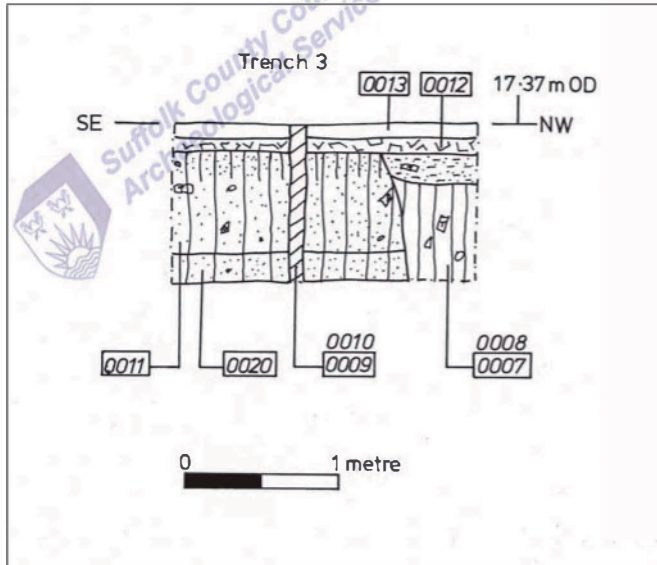


Fig. 5 1:50 section drawing of Trench 3

metres of moderately stratified dark brown loam (0011) was recorded which in turn overlay c.0.2 metres of clean brown loam (0020) over the naturally occurring subsoil.

Two features were recorded; a pit (0007) and a bore-hole (0009), both only seen in the southern side of the trench and recorded in section (Fig 5).

Pit 0007 was vertical sided and continued down beyond the base of the trench. The fill (0008) comprised an upper component of silty sand

overlying brown loam with brick and tile inclusions.

The 0.1 metre diameter bore-hole (0009) contained a fill (0010) of light grey coloured silty clay.



Plate 3: Trench 3

Trench 4

Relevant Levels:

- Existing floor surface
- Naturally occurring subsoil
- Centre of Bedford Street adjacent to Trench

17.33 m OD

17.00 m OD

17.84 m OD



Plate 4: Trench 4

Trench 4 was located towards the north-west corner of the site (Fig. 2). At this juncture the composite concrete slab was 0.25 metres thick with steel reinforcing in the lower component. The slab lay on c.0.1 metre rubble hardcore which, in turn, lay upon clean clayey sand subsoil. The clean unweathered condition of the subsoil surface suggests that it had been truncated at this point. Given that the level of Bedford Street immediately to the north was c.0.84 metres higher than

that of the natural subsoil, this could be considered to be further evidence for truncation in this area.

No features were identified and no finds were recovered.

3.2 The Finds (by Richenda Goffin)

Introduction

Finds were collected from five contexts, as shown in the table below.

OP	Pottery		Fired clay		Animal bone		Oyster shell		Spot/date
	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	
0005	6	102			17	292			10th-11th C
0006	1	6	1	35	2	27			10th-14th C (unstrat)
0021	3	68							10th-11th C (unstrat)
0023	3	36			1	6	2	6	L12th-14th C
0026	3	107			3	22	1	6	L12th-14th C
Total	16	319	1	35	23	347	3	12	

Table 1 Finds quantification by context

Pottery

A total of 16 fragments of pottery were recovered from the evaluation, weighing 0.319kg in total. The ceramics date to the Late Saxon and the medieval period. A breakdown of the pottery by major fabric is shown below.

Fabric	Code	Date	No.	Wt/g
Thetford-type Ware	THET	LSax	10	179
Medieval Coarseware	MCW	Med	1	4
Local medieval unglazed ware	LMU	L12th-14th C	1	6
Unprovenanced med glazed ware	UPG	L12th-14th C	4	130
Total			16	319

Table 2 Pottery quantification by fabric

A number of fragments of Thetford-type ware were found in pit-fill 0005 (Trench 1). In addition to several body sherds, the rim of an angled bowl with pronounced carination was identified (Dallas BB12). A sherd of a medieval coarseware of Local medieval unglazed ware type was present in 0006, a number given to mixed finds recovered from the fill of ditch 0002 and pit 0004.

Three further sherds of Thetford-type ware were identified in 0021, a number given to unstratified material from Trench 2. Two fragments of medieval date were recovered from pit-fill 0023, along with a sherd of Thetford-type ware. The medieval wares include the rim of a glazed jug decorated with applied thumbing, made from a hard sandy fabric with a reduced core. This is similar to Colchester-type ware, but the thumbing decoration under the rim is not a feature of this fabric. Three other medieval glazed wares were present in layer 0026. A large fragment from the upper part of a decorated jug was recovered, which had a strap handle ridged with an applied strip of thumbing clay. The vessel has small spots of lead glaze on the interior and a few dribbles of glaze above and below the handle. The thumbing base of similar but slightly micaceous glazed jug was also present and a more abraded body sherd of a glazed vessel made from a finer fabric, perhaps an Ipswich Glazed ware sherd. Overall the glazed wares date to the late 12th-14th century.

Fired clay

A single, very abraded fragment of fired clay was present in mixed finds group 0006. It is made of a medium sandy fabric containing moderate chalk inclusions up to 2mm in length and is patchily oxidised. Although probably structural, it is also possible that it is a fragment of a ceramic loomweight.

Animal bone

Twenty-three pieces of animal bone were collected from the evaluation in total (0.347kg). Much of the material was very fragmentary, heavily stained, and not closely identifiable. The largest group was recovered from the fill 0005 of the Late Saxon pit. The bone included the shaft of a bovine metatarsus, a fragment of the mandible of a sheep, and three large rib pieces from cattle and possibly pig.

Shell

Three fragments of oyster shell were recovered from two contexts in Trench 2, which were discarded after recording.

Discussion

Pottery of Late Saxon and medieval date was identified from the pits and other features excavated during the evaluation. Both groups of ceramics are often recovered from sites in central Ipswich. Further work may be undertaken in the future on identifying more closely the medieval glazed wares.

4. Archaeological Interpretation

The archaeological features recorded in the evaluation were consistent with the known historical dating of Ipswich's St. George's suburb which first developed during the later Saxon period and has been continually occupied since that time. While features were limited to pits and a ditch, it is possible that structural evidence survives, probably fronting onto a precursor to St. George's Street. The ditch identified in Trench 1 may be related to the earlier street pattern.

5. Archaeological Potential of the Site & Recommendations for Further Archaeological Work

While the trial-trenching was limited in extent it has provided evidence that suggests there is a low density of occupation features throughout the site with, perhaps, the exception of the northernmost end where the natural subsoil appears to have been truncated. At this juncture only deeply incised archaeological features are likely to have survived.

The nature of any further archaeological works will depend entirely on the extent of ground disturbance associated with the future development. At this juncture, it is understood that the St. George Street side of the site will have basemented car parking and in that area, at least, there will be total destruction of the archaeology. It is also likely that the southern end of the site will need to be lowered considerably to make it conform to the external ground level south of the existing building. On that basis it does seem likely that the archaeology within the entire building footprint is at risk and may require total excavation prior to the development. However, it should be noted that there has been some truncation of the natural subsoil at the northern end of the building where only deeply incised features are likely to survive.

6. References

Rogerson, A., and Dallas, C., 1984, 'The pottery' in Excavations in Thetford 1948-59 and 1973-80, EAA Report No 22, 117-166.



Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of the Field Projects Division alone. The need for further work will be determined by the Local Planning Authority and its archaeological advisors when a planning application is registered. Suffolk County Council's archaeological contracting service cannot accept responsibility for inconvenience caused to clients should the Planning Authority take a different view to that expressed in the report.

Appendix I IPS 502: Context List & Descriptions

OPNO	CONTEXT	COMPONENT	GRIDSQ	IDENTIFIER	DESCRIPTION	CUTS	OVER	CUTBY	UNDER	PERIOD/PHASE
0001	0001	0001	Whole Site	U/S finds	Overall context number allocated to unstratified finds from the whole site					
0002	0002	0002	Trench 1	Ditch (Cut)	N-S orientated ditch, appears to cut to base of concrete slab 0014 on S. side of the trench, elsewhere under layer 0015	0004/5			0014, 0015	
0003	0002	0002	Trench 1	Ditch (Fill)	Dark brown sandy loam with laminated 'waterlain' fine sand at base, particularly to N.				0014, 0015	
0004	0004	0004	Trench 1	Pit (Cut)	Pit			0002	0015	L.Saxon
0005	0004	0004	Trench 1	Pit (Fill)	Relatively homogenous brown sandy loam fill of 0004			0002	0015	L.Saxon
0006	0001	0001	Trench 1	U/S finds	Mixed finds from ditch 0002 & pit 0004, probably from pit 0004, but not certain					
0007	0007	0007	Trench 3	Pit (Cut)	Pit right on S. edge of trench, appears in section only, cuts to base of clinker layer 0012. Continues on down into natural subsoil.	0011, 0020			0012	P.Med
0008	0007	0007	Trench 3	Pit (Fill)	Stratified fill of 0007, sand & tile at top, dark brown loam at base				0012	P.Med
0009	0009	0009	Trench 3	Bore-hole (Cut)	Bore-hole appearing in S. side of trench, appears in section	0011, 0012, 0013				Modern
0010	0009	0009	Trench 3	Bore-hole (Fill)	Grey silty clay fill of 0009					Modern
0011	0011	0011	Trench 3	Layer	Made ground/overburden layer over original topsoil 0020, c.0.7 metres thick, brown loam, hint of stratification			0009, 0007	0012	Modern
0012	0012	0012	Trench 3	Layer	c.0.1 metre thick layer of clinker and hardcore below slab 0013		0011, 0007/8	0009	0013	Modern
0013	0013	0013	Trench 3	Slab	c.0.1 metre thick concrete slab over Trench 3		0012	0009		Modern
0014	0014	0014	Trench 1	Slab	Double slab, c.0.1 metres of hard concrete over c.0.08 metres of softer material, slab over Trench 1		0015, 0002			Modern
0015	0015	0015	Trench 1	Layer	Layer of mixed loam (more towards top) and patchy sand sealing the features in Trench 1. Varies between 0.05 to 0.2 metres thick.		0002, 0004		0014	
0016	0016	0016	Trench 1	Bore-hole (Cut)	Bore-hole seen cutting base of pit 0004					Modern
0017	0016	0016	Trench 1	Bore-hole (Fill)	Grey silty clay fill of 0016	0004/5, 0014, 0015				Modern

Appendix I IPS 502: Context List & Descriptions

OPNO	CONTEXT	COMPONENT	LOCATION	IDENTIFIER	DESCRIPTION	CUTS	OVER	CUTBY	UNDER	PERIOD/PHASE
0018	0018	0018	Trench 4	Slab	Double slab, c.0.04 metres of hard concrete over c.0.16 metres with steel reinforcing, slab over Trench 4		0019			Modern
0019	0019	0019	Trench 4	Layer	c.0.1 metres of hardcore below 0018 lying directly on truncated natural sand subsoil				0018	Modern
0020	0020	0020	Trench 3	Layer	c.0.2 metres thick layer of homogenous brown sandy loam. Original topsoil at base of trench.			0009, 0007		
0021	0001	0001	Trench 2	U/S finds	Unstratified finds from Trench 2					
0022	0022	0022	Trench 2	Pit (Cut)	Irregular shaped pit	0024/25			0026	Med
0023	0022	0022	Trench 2	Pit (Fill)	Grey/brown silty sand fill of 0022				0026	Med
0024	0024	0024	Trench 2	Pit (Cut)	Very shallow pit? Possibly natural depression/tree-hole			0022	0026	
0025	0024	0024	Trench 2	Pit (Fill)	Mixed brown silty sand & clean yellow sand fill of 0024			0022	0026	
0026	0026	0026	Trench 2	Layer	c.0.4 metres thick layer of homogenous brown sandy loam. Original topsoil at base of trench.		0022/23, 0024/25		0027	
0027	0027	0027	Trench 2	Layer	Layer of mixed sand loam and clay 0.1-0.2 c, thick, locally has lime mortar inclusions		0026		0028	P.Med
0028	0028	0028	Trench 2	Layer	Layer of dark grey loam with charcoal, coal, brick/tile frags & stones. 0.1-0.3 metres thick		0027		0029	Modern
0029	0029	0029	Trench 2	Layer	Predominantly sand & gravel, locally silty, includes area with broken 'cod' bottles. Seen in E-W section only		0028		0030	Modern
0030	0030	0030	Trench 2	Layer	c.0.5 metres thick layer of relatively homogenous brown sandy loam		0029		0031	Modern
0031	0031	0031	Trench 2	Layer	0.1-0.2 metres of rubble/hardcore immediately below slab 0032		0030		0032	Modern
0032	0032	0032	Trench 2	Layer	c.0.1-0.15 metre thick concrete slab over Trench 2		0031			Modern
0033	0033	0033	Trench 2	Layer	lense of lime mortar & rubble seen in S-N section only. Possibly laterally continuous with 0029		0028		0030	Modern