

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF

**All Weather Hockey Pitch, Orwell Park School,
Nacton
NAC 101**

OASIS ID: Suffolk c1 – 17807

**PLANNING APPLICATION REF: C/05/0978/FUL and C/06/0314/FUL
N.G. REF: TM 2147 3953**

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Report No. 2006/154

Commissioned by: CgMs Consulting

Funded by: Orwell Park School

Summary

An area on the north bank of the River Orwell was stripped and levelled for an all weather hockey pitch for Orwell Park School. Despite the likely location of this site for ancient settlement (on a raised terrace above the river) little evidence for past use was discovered. This was partly due to the shallow excavation of the site (natural sand was only revealed across the north of the site), the method of excavation (involving a box scraper which tracked over the exposed surface) and the very dry and dusty conditions which made visibility poor. A small quantity of post-medieval (17th to 19th centuries AD) finds was recovered from the machined surface.



Figure 1: location of Orwell Park School, on the north bank of the River Orwell and to the south-east of Ipswich

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Introduction

The planning permission granted for the creation of the all weather pitch at Orwell Park School was conditional upon archaeological monitoring visits made during the excavation and lowering of the site area.

The archaeological potential of this site centres on its proximity to prehistoric finds scatters and features within a 700m radius. The site is situated on a terrace overlooking the River Orwell and is thus a prime location for past occupation and activity.

A 'Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief' was prepared by CgMs Consulting who commissioned Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (Field Team) to conduct the work.

Monitoring visits were made on the 25th, 26th and 31st of July and the 2nd August 2006. Visits were made by Rob Atfield and Jezz Meredith.



Figure 2: location of all weather hockey pitch within the grounds of Orwell Park School

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Results

The excavation of the site, which entailed a 'cut and fill' method of levelling the ground, in most cases only removed the topsoil to c.300mm depth. The mid to pale brown silty sand subsoil was exposed in places but natural sand was only seen within the northern corner of the site. No archaeological features were recognised in this area.

The site was reduced using a box scraper, which meant that any exposed ground was immediately tracked over making feature recognition almost impossible. Also the

work was carried out during a very hot and dry period so that the site was covered in dust and soil colour differences were hard to detect.

Despite the conditions, a small collection of pottery and pipe stem fragments was collected from the surface of the exposed subsoil.

Finds

Three sherds of pottery were collected, including two pieces of blue and grey German imported Westerweld stoneware, of likely 17th century date. A fragment of white-slipped, honey-glazed earthenware jar rim with a gallery for a lid was of probable local origin and could date from the 17th to 19th centuries.

Three pieces of clay pipe stem were recovered. All are relatively thick (8-11mm) with a wide bore (2-3mm). One fragment has part of a simple flat, undecorated heel and also shows evidence of knife trimming. All are likely to be of 17th to 18th century in date.

Conclusions

No evidence for ancient settlement or use of the site could be detected, although the method of excavation and the weather conditions were not conducive to archaeological monitoring.

Finds of post-medieval date (17th -19th century) were recovered from this area and some predate Orwell Park House (presently the school) most of which is thought to be of 19th century date, although an earlier house is likely.

Jezz Meredith

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (Field Team)

August 2006