

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service

Monitoring Report

243 Bramford Lane, Ipswich
(Planning Application IP/06/00565)

SMR- IPS 511

SCCAS Report No. 2006/220

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Robert Atfield: Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Field Team (Report)
Keith Wade: SCCAS Conservation Team (Brief and Specification)
John Newman: Field Officer/Contracts Manager

Summary

Archaeological monitoring was carried out at 243 Bramford Road, Ipswich as a condition of planning application (IP/06/00565); the monitoring is funded by Mr. Paul Taylor. The site is centred on TM 1468 4566 where a residential development of seven semi-detached houses are to be constructed in addition to a garage, access provision and services. This entails digging around 1600 linear metres of footing trenches within the four building footprints along with ground levelling and access road construction. A total of four visits were made to the site: on the 20th and 26th of October and the 2nd and 14th of November 2006. It was possible to examine the majority of the footing trenches, levelled ground and the access road in bright dry conditions. A quantity of the upcast soil was also available for inspection. However, in spite of a thorough examination of all deposits under the full co-operation of the landowners and contractors the monitoring failed to produce any evidence of archaeological features or finds.



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Trench and Access Road Location



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Introduction

The plot of land to the rear of 243 Bramford Lane is one of the few areas of ground in this part of the town to have avoided development until the present day. The 1880s and 1920s Ordnance Survey maps show that the plot was open ground, probably a large garden, for at least the last hundred years. Allotment gardens and a small recreation ground surrounded the site until extensive terraced housing and Springfield School were built. Within living memory the site was cultivated as a market garden and the deep loamy topsoil which was observed throughout the site is probably partly due to this long-term cultivation and improvement. The site lies within an area of high archaeological potential, adjacent to the Boss Hall multi-period site and the site of an Anglo-Saxon Church (Wade 2006). The Sites and Monuments Record contains records of individual finds found within 250 metres of the site ranging from coins from the Romano-British period, Ipswich ware and a late Saxon brooch.

Methodology

The Brief and Specification for archaeological monitoring was produced by Keith Wade, of the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team (dated 21-08-2006). In view of the potential of the location, it was considered that regular archaeological monitoring of the site would provide an adequate record of any archaeology.

All areas of ground disturbance were examined by the visiting archaeologist during the four monitoring visits. Measured sketch plans were prepared on site in order to record locations of specific deposits, features, archaeological finds and soil profiles. A large quantity of upcast soil and areas of stripped and levelled ground were searched in order to retrieve any available datable archaeological finds.

Conclusion

The site was generally cleared and levelled by the time of the first visit with large areas of topsoil exposed. This gave a good opportunity for searching the area for finds which may be contained within the upper deposits. The soil was notably clean except for occasional nineteenth and twentieth century fragments of domestic ceramic material. On subsequent visits the depth of the topsoil could be seen in section within the open footing trenches, depths ranged from 0.40-0.50m.. The topsoil was of light loamy sand, mid-pale brown with very few large stones. Extensive fine root disturbance was evident, especially near to the perimeter of the site. The only finds from this deposit were of nineteenth, but more commonly twentieth century dates and were generally concentrated within shallow pits or depressions towards the north end of the site. Most of these concentrations were probably the debris from bonfires or relatively recent domestic rubbish disposal. The subsoil varied in depth from between 0.15m. to 0.35m. and consisted of orange-brown silty sand and gravel. Below this was a virtually pure natural gravel deposit with variable aggregate sizes of between 5-50mm.. Only one observed feature was sufficiently deep to cut through the subsoil and natural deposit. This was a modern pit located within the centre of the most northerly house plot; it contained twentieth century bottles, metalwork debris and ceramic building materials. The site contained no observable archaeological features or finds.

Robert Atfield
Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
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References

Wade, K., 2006 'Brief and Specification for Archaeological Monitoring: 243 Bramford Lane, Ipswich' SCCAS Conservation Team, Bury St Edmunds.