

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

IPS 521 The Centre, Stoke Park, Ipswich

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION, 2006
(Planning app. no. IP/05/01010)

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Clare Good
Field Team
Suffolk C.C. Archaeological Service

© December 2006

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Lucy Robinson, County Director of Environment and Transport
Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX

SCCAS Report No. 2006/231
Oasis Ref. Suffolkc1-21290

Contents	
List of Figures	1
List of Contributors	2
Acknowledgements	2
Summary	2
SMR information	2
Introduction	3
Methodology	3
Results	5
Discussion	5

Appendix 1: Brief and specification

List of Figures	
1. Site Location	4
2. Development area and evaluation trenches	4

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

List of Contributors

Clare Good Project Officer Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service

Acknowledgements

This project was funded by Cyril Sweett and was monitored by Dr Jess Tipper (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team (SCCASCT)).

Thanks are due to Neil Haire, of RG Group, who liased between the archaeologists and the developer throughout the project.

Clare Good undertook and directed the project which was managed by John Newman, who also provided advice during the production of the report.

Summary

Ipswich, The Centre, Stoke Park Drive, Ipswich. (TM 1521 4239, IPS 521)

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in advance of the demolition of an existing shopping centre, and the creation of a new series of shops at The Centre, Stoke Park Drive, Ipswich, in order to characterise the nature of any surviving archaeological deposits. A desktop study of the area (SCCAS 2006/178) identified that due to the topographical position of the site, there was a high potential for archaeology of all periods, but ground levels were extensively altered during the construction of the original centre in 1969 and as such, surviving archaeology was unlikely. However, the grass verges surrounding the centre were thought to be undisturbed and so trenches through these areas were excavated. Two trenches were excavated over the north and north east of development area, one of which was stripped to the level of the natural subsoil. No archaeological evidence was revealed. Three further trenches were planned but the discovery of a gas pipe through two, and the likelihood of further services in the third meant that these trenches were abandoned.

(C. Good, for SCCAS and Cyril Sweett; 2006/231)

SMR information

Planning application no.	IP/05/01010
Date of fieldwork:	18-12-2006
Grid Reference:	TM 1521 4239
Funding body:	Cyril Sweett

Introduction

An application has been made to build a new shopping complex on the site of the former Centre, on Stoke Park Drive in Ipswich. Planning consent was conditional on an archaeological evaluation being undertaken. The evaluation area is centred on TM 1521 4239 and currently consists of a series of grass verges surrounding the complex.

The total area of development covers an area of c. 18790 square metres with the evaluation covering an area of c. 3990 square metres. The site lies at between 33m OD at the north end to 21m OD at the south. The plot is steeply sloping to the south west with an underlying drift geology of silty clay. It lies adjacent to Stoke Park Drive to the north and east, with a housing estate to the south and east.

A desktop study (SCCAS 2006/178) was undertaken in advance of the evaluation. This identified that due to the topographical position of the site, on a promontory overlooking the confluence of the River Orwell and Belstead Brook, there was a high potential for archaeology of all periods. However, ground levels were extensively altered during the construction of the original centre in 1969 and as such, surviving archaeology was thought to be unlikely. The grass verges surrounding the centre were thought to be undisturbed though, and so trenches through these areas were planned.

Consequently, it was deemed necessary to evaluate these plots in the first instance. A Brief and Specification for the archaeological work (Appendix I) was produced by Jess Tipper of Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service (SCCAS) Conservation Team and the work was carried out by Clare Good of the SCCAS Field Team, funded by Cyril Sweett.

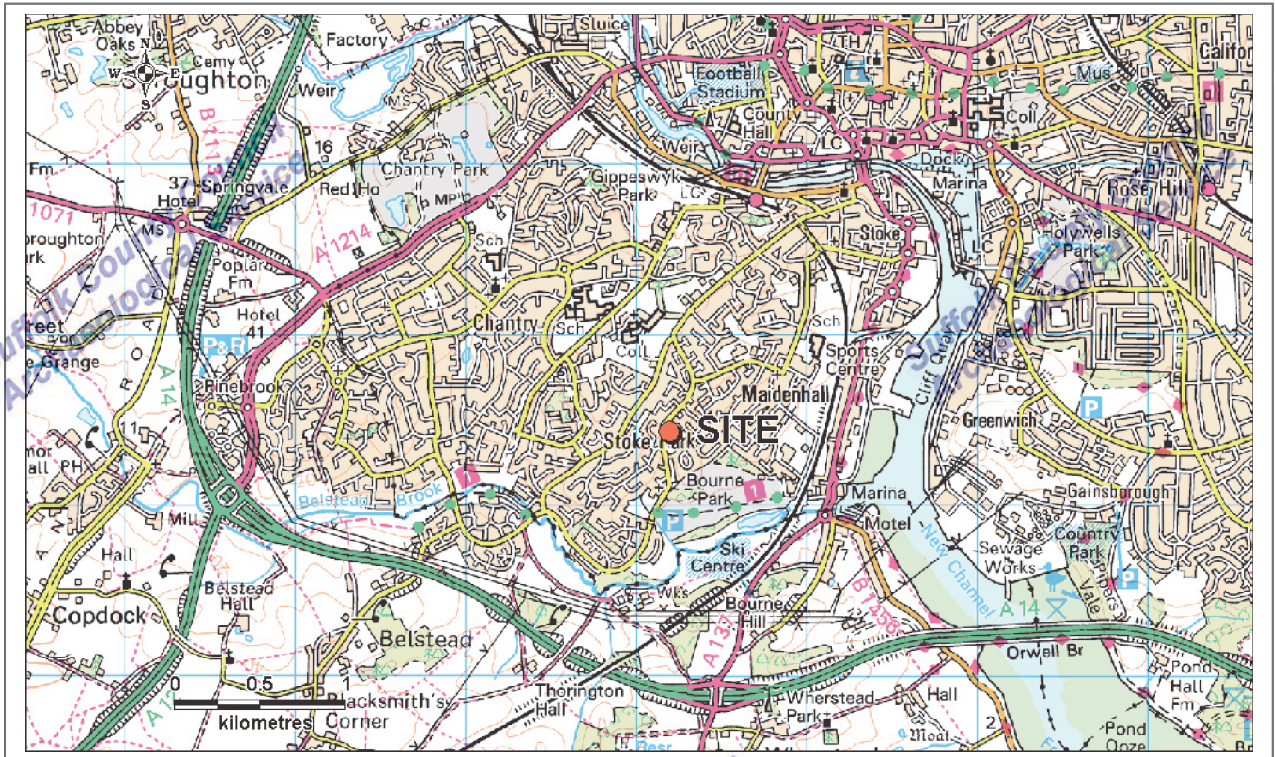
Methodology

3 trenches were excavated to the level of the natural subsoil in December 2006 using a tracked 5 ton mini-digger machine fitted with a 1.5m wide toothless ditching bucket. They were located in an attempt to sample as much of the undisturbed development area as possible, in locations agreed by SCCAS Conservation Team (Fig. 2). Only 12m in length were excavated (due to the presence of modern services) under constant supervision from the observing archaeologist.

Both the excavated topsoil and the exposed surface of the trenches were examined visually for finds and features. The location of the trenches within the development area was determined using a handheld GPS system. The site archive will be deposited in the County SMR at Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds.

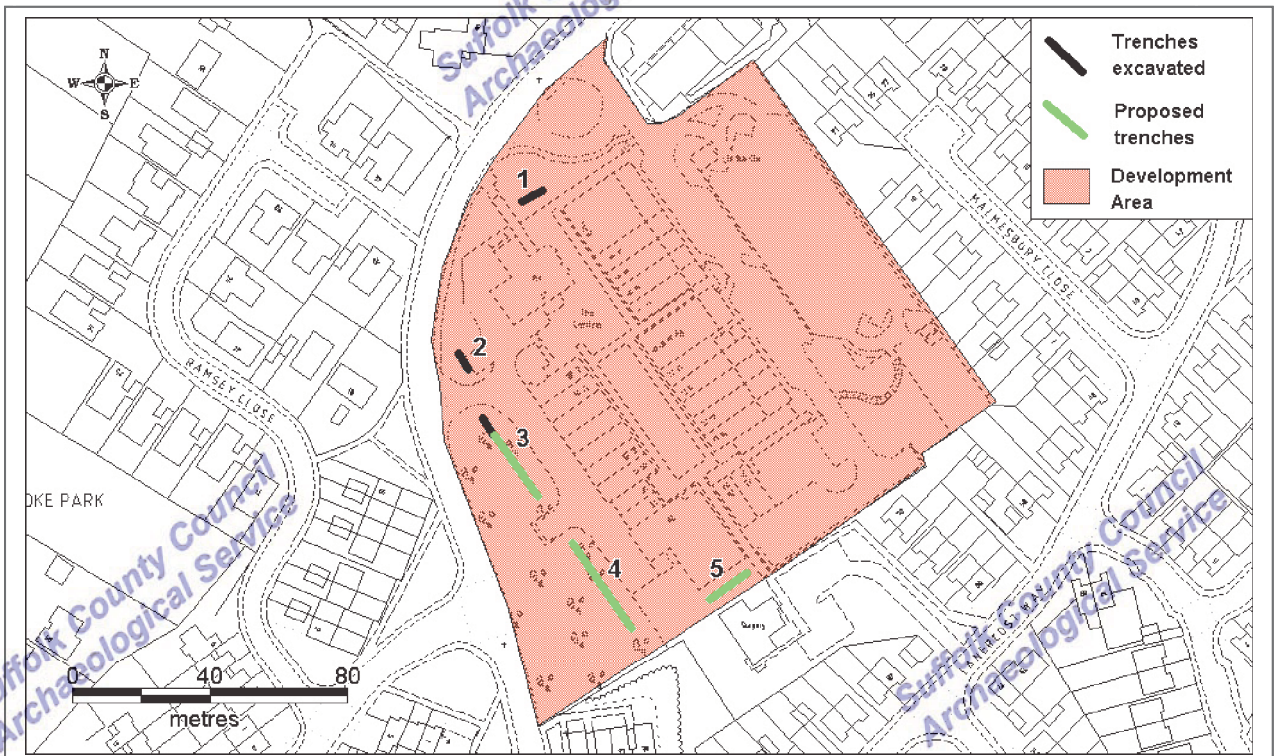
Cyril Sweett funded all archaeological work.

The site and subsequent results are recorded on OASIS, the online archaeological database, under the code Suffolkc1-21290.



©Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Suffolk County Council. Licence No. 100023395 2006

Figure 1: Site Location



©Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Suffolk County Council. Licence No. 100023395 2006

Figure 2: Development area and evaluation trenches

Results

Topsoil 0001 was similar over trenches 1 and 2 and comprised a dark brown humic sand. It was, on average, c.0.15 - 0.2m deep throughout.

Subsoil 0002 was also similar over trenches 1 and 2 and consisted of a mid orange sandy silt, loosely compacted, with very occasional stones. This was c.0.5m deep in trench 1, and the base of it was not reached in trench 2.

Visibility in the trenches was reasonably good.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was 6m in length and aligned NE-SW. It was excavated to a depth of c.0.7m. The SW end was heavily disturbed with modern builders sand, bricks and such like throughout, to the depth of the naturally occurring subsoil. The NE end was not disturbed, and the natural subsoil was again visible at 0.7m, suggesting that the natural levels were not disturbed by the modern rubbish. However, there were no archaeological finds or features seen.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was 4.5m in length and was aligned NW-SE. It was excavated to a depth of c.1m and there were no archaeological finds or features. The natural subsoil was not reached in this trench but due to the proximity to the road, and the fact that the development would not go deeper than 1m, it was not excavated further.

Trench 3

Only c.1m was excavated in trench 3. This was to be aligned NW-SE, however, at c.0.7m depth, a gas pipe was encountered running in the same direction as the trench, and so the trench was abandoned. There was no room to re-locate this trench.

Trench 4

As the gas pipe would have continued through trench 4, and again there was no room to re-locate this trench, this was also not excavated.

Trench 5

Modern service maps also indicated that trench 5 would have a mains gas supply and cable trenches through it and so again because there was no room to re-locate it, and based on the negative results of the first two trenches, this was also not excavated.

Discussion

This evaluation allows few conclusions to be made about the archaeological potential of the site. Trenches 3-5 were disturbed and so not fully excavated, and the nature of the site and the fact that the ground levels were extensively altered during the 1969 construction of the former shopping complex meant that moving these trenches to an undisturbed area was not possible. Trench 2 was also not excavated fully, due to its proximity to the road.

Trench 1 showed no archaeology but conclusions can not be fairly drawn on a 6m trench for this entire area. Therefore, it is possible that archaeology does exist within this complex, but the nature of the 1960's development and the probable complete truncation of the site during this time suggests that it may have been disturbed throughout.

Disclaimer

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.

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service