

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

Ranelagh Primary School, Pauls Road, Ipswich

IPS 582

Planning App. No. IP/07/00456/FPC

Oasis ID No. suffolkc1-30731

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING, 2007



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SMR information

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Summary

The development consists of an artificial outdoors play or games surface to replace an unusable grassed area. An area of ground measuring 16.00m (NW-SE) by 26.00m (SW-NE) was stripped to a depth of 0.25m. The gradual south-easterly slope, which existed before the ground-works began, was not altered. Subsoil or natural deposits were barely reached, except for small patches within the central and north areas. Extensive modern and nineteenth century rubbish, including glass, metal and plastics occurred near to a demolished wall, probably deposited in a group of poorly defined pits. The site and spoil heap was fully searched visually and also metal-detected for archaeological finds. All of the items recovered dated from the late 18th- 20th centuries (not retained). No archaeological finds or features were located.

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Methodology
- 3.0 Results
- 4.0 Conclusions
- 5.0 Acknowledgements

List of Figures

- Fig. 1 Site location
- Fig. 2 Site in the context of The County Sites and Monuments Record
- Fig. 3 First Edition of The Ordnance Survey Map (c. 1880s)
- Fig. 4 Plan of areas of ground disturbance

1. 0 Introduction

The development consists of an outdoors play or games surface, within an area of ground measuring 16.00m (NW-SE) by 26.00m (SW-NE) located to the north-west of the school (see Figure 1.). The development lies just to the south-east of a large and important Saxon cemetery (IPS 016) (see Figure 2.) which contained at least 174 burials. The location also lies close to the convergence of several major routes of communication, including the River Gipping and several long existing main roads. However, a recent trenched evaluation almost directly to the east of the present development failed to locate any significant archaeology, suggesting that evidence of occupation may be dispersed in this area. The First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of the location indicates that the site was within an area of undeveloped agricultural land lying alongside a rope walk during the later nineteenth century (see Figure 3.) Before long the school was built to the south-east and the location was rapidly surrounded by development, however the actual site seems to have escaped any substantial building development, possibly remaining as a garden for most of the last century.

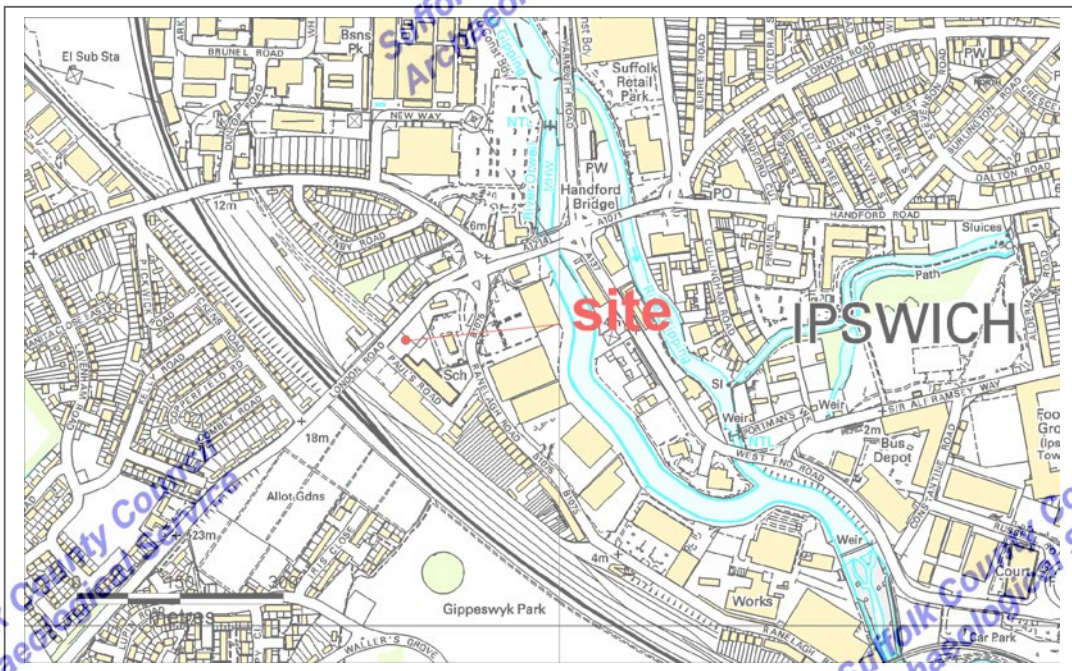


Figure 1. Site location

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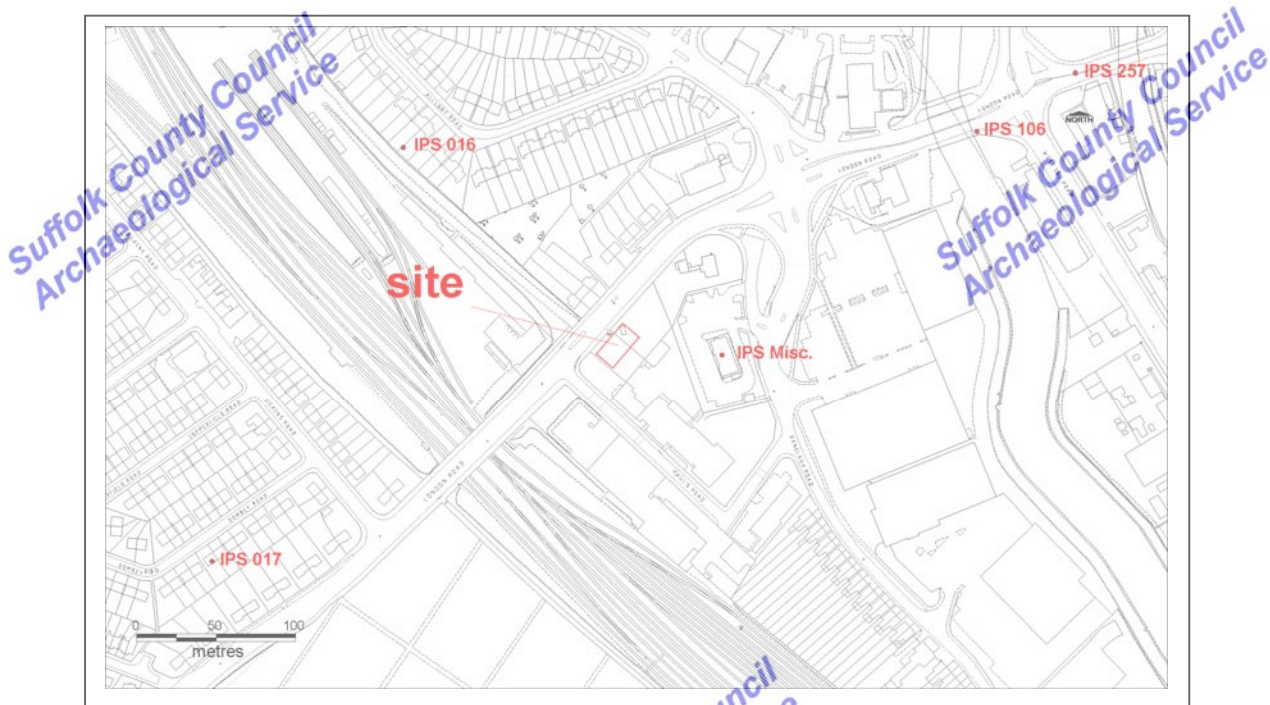


Figure 2. Nearby sites on the SMR

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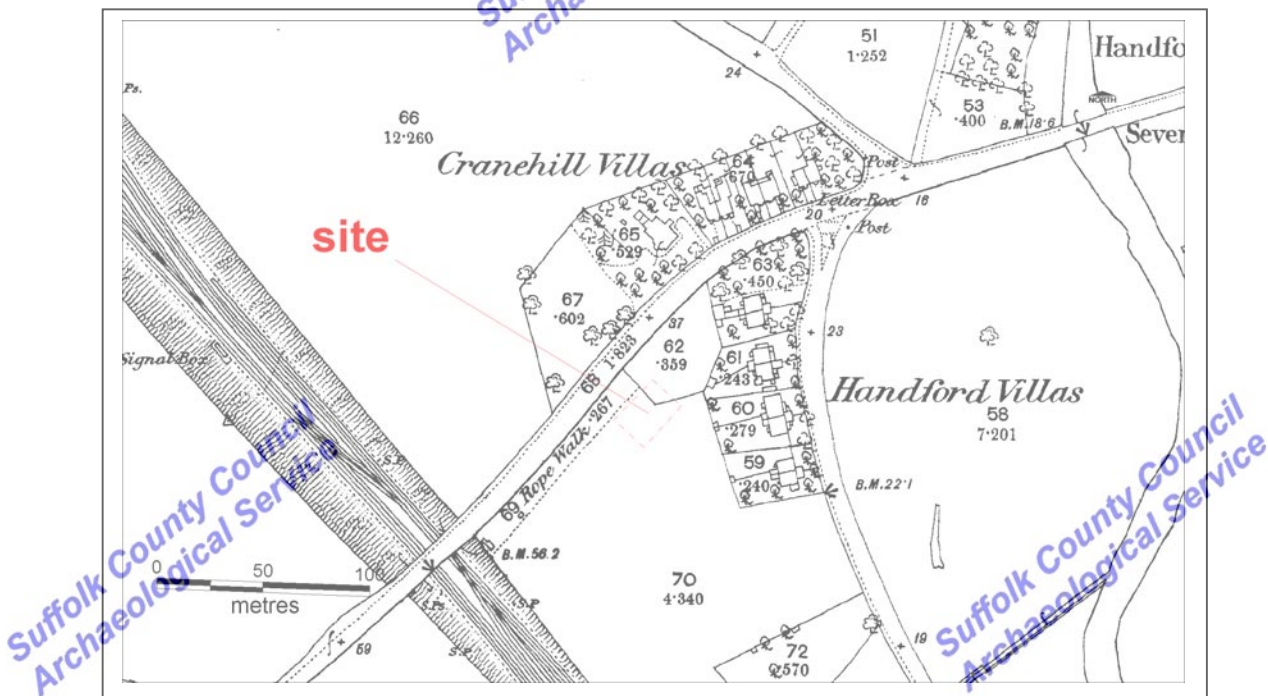


Figure 3. The site on the c.1880 OS

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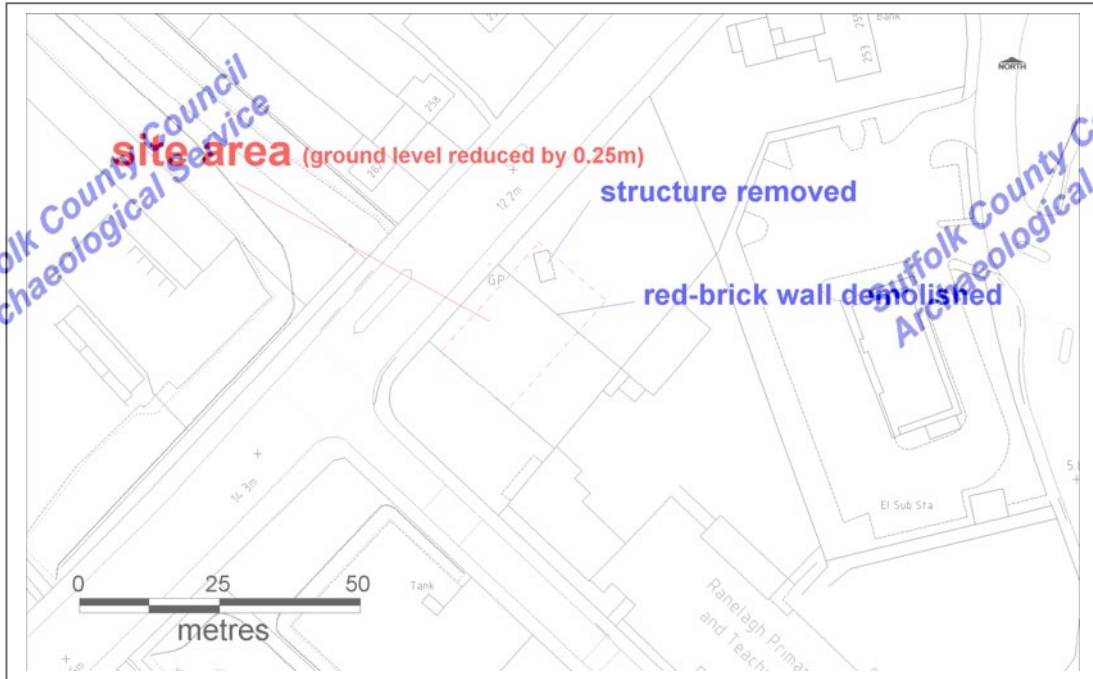


Figure 4. Plan of excavated areas

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2.0 Methodology

The details of all ground disturbance were recorded onto a measured sketch plan, which was prepared on site. The extent of the area of ground reduction, features, approximate levels and soil profiles were plotted and described. Digital photographs were also taken of all aspects of the site including the faces of any exposed sections. A thorough search was also made of the upcast and disturbed soil with the aim of retrieving datable archaeological material; this included a complete metal detector search of the entire site area and the spoil heaps. Excavation was carried out using a tracked mechanical 360° digger fitted with a 1.50m toothless bucket. Conditions were generally good in terms of visibility and moisture levels.

3.0 Results

The surface was stripped to a depth of 0.25m across the entire site. A gradual south-easterly slope, which existed before the ground-works began, was not altered. Subsoil or natural deposits were barely reached except for small patches within the central and north areas. The topsoil was around 0.25-0.30m deep and of mid-brown sandy loam containing CBM and slate fragments, together with modern refuse. The subsoil or natural deposits were

of orange sand with patches of gravel. Moderate root disturbance was evident, especially near to the London Road boundary. Extensive modern and nineteenth century rubbish, including glass, metal, plastics etc., occurred near to the demolished wall (see Figure 4.) probably deposited in a group of poorly defined pits. The site and spoil heap was fully searched visually and metal-detected, for archaeological finds. All of the items recovered dated from the late 18th - 20th centuries (not retained). No archaeological features or finds were located.

4.0 Conclusions

The limited depth of the ground disturbance associated with this development would have prevented the detection of archaeological features if present. Therefore, the potential of the site cannot be discounted in archaeological terms. However, the site failed to produce any finds material other than modern items. The site deposits give a general impression of sustained cultivation, both as agricultural land and probably later as garden and waste ground before being incorporated into the school amenity area.

5.0 Acknowledgements and List of Contributors

This project was funded by Suffolk County Council (Education) and was monitored by Keith Wade (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Team).

The fieldwork was carried out by Robert Atfield from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team.

The project was managed by John Newman, who also provided advice during the production of the report.