

SEH WINDOWS AND DOORS LTD, OLYMPUS CLOSE, WHITEHOUSE ROAD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, IPSWICH (IPS 464)

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

SMR Information

Planning Application No: IP/04/00046/FUL
Grid Reference: TM 136 470

Date of Fieldwork: 20th – 31st August 2004
Funding Body: N/A

Introduction

Planning permission (IP/04/00046/FUL) has been granted for the erection of light manufacturing premises, showrooms and vehicle parking at 'Plot 2' Olympus Close, Ipswich, Suffolk. The site lies at approximately 30m AOD on land that slopes gently down to the south-east. The site is centred approximately on NGR TM 1362 4702 and encompasses some 7300m².



Figure 1. Site location

(© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Suffolk County Council Licence No. 100023395 2004)

No known archaeological sites recorded by the County SMR lie within the site itself, although two brick kilns are indicated on the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1838; one c. 150m to the south-east, and a second (with associated 'works') c. 250m to the south-west.

Given the extensive nature of the development and the intrusive nature of some of the groundwork an archaeological Watching Brief was recommended by Judith Plouviez of the SCCAS Conservation Team.

Methodology

The following visits were made:

- 20/08/04. To observe the initial topsoil strip/clearance.
- 25/08/04. To observe the reduced level dig at the northern end of the site.
- 31/08/04. To monitor the reduced level dig in the SE corner of the site.

The stripping was carried out using a large 360⁰ tracked mechanical excavator (Hymac) equipped with a flat bladed ditching bucket. Visibility of features on the stripped surface was therefore excellent. However, all spoil was directly loaded for removal from site and was not available for examination. Also the stripped areas were systematically covered with crushed hardcore soon after their exposure. Consequently, unless continuous monitoring

was carried out (and this was not economical in this case), not all of the stripped areas could be examined in detail (see Fig. 2). All the deposits encountered were individually described and allocated context numbers in a continuous numbering system. The site was assigned the SMR number IPS 464.

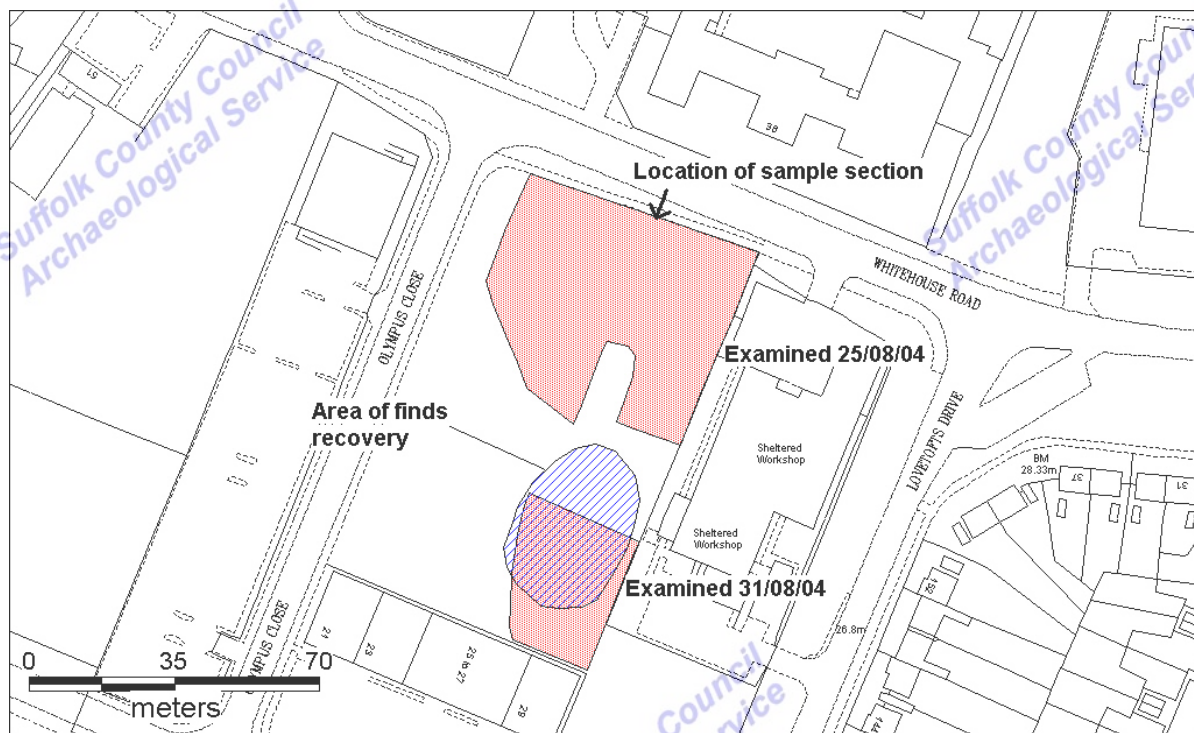


Figure 2. Site detail with location of finds scatter and observed areas.

(© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Suffolk County Council Licence No. 100023395 2004)

Results

At the time of the first visit (20/08/04) only superficial soil stripping/clearance had been carried out to a depth of *c.* 0.25m across much of the site. At this time the stripped surface comprised partially disturbed silty subsoil in which discrete archaeological features could not be identified. A site walkover recorded a scatter of finds including prehistoric pottery, struck flint implements and burnt flint (see below) in an area toward the south-eastern corner of the site (see Fig. 2).

During the second visit (25/08/04) an aggressive/substantial reduced level dig had been carried out over an area of *c.* 2000m² in the northern part of the site (see Fig. 2). The prevailing slope meant that this reduction in levels varied between *c.* 0.5m Below ground level (bgl.) at the south-eastern edge of the site to over 2m bgl. at the north-western edge. The following common stratigraphy was recorded:

Context	Depth (bgl)	Description
0002	0 – 0.5m	Topsoil. Soft mid brownish grey loam with moderate small to medium flint pebbles and rare CBM/modern debris fragments.
0003	0.5 – 1.5m	Subsoil. Firm light brown weathered clay subsoil with rare small to medium angular to sub-rounded flints. Poorly sorted.
0004	1.5 – 2m+	Natural Drift. Stiff olive green/grey clay with occasional small sub-rounded chalk nodules/flecks and rare sub-angular flint pebbles/cobbles.

No archaeological finds or features could be seen during this visit. The horizon at which archaeological features could be anticipated was at the interface of 0002 and 0003. Unfortunately, throughout much of the area the reduction in level was such that this depth had been exceeded by as much as 1m, precluding the survival of all but the deepest of archaeological features. A basic photographic record was made of the deposits exposed in the upstanding section adjacent to Whitehouse Road (see Fig. 1) and the sequence is shown in Fig. 3.

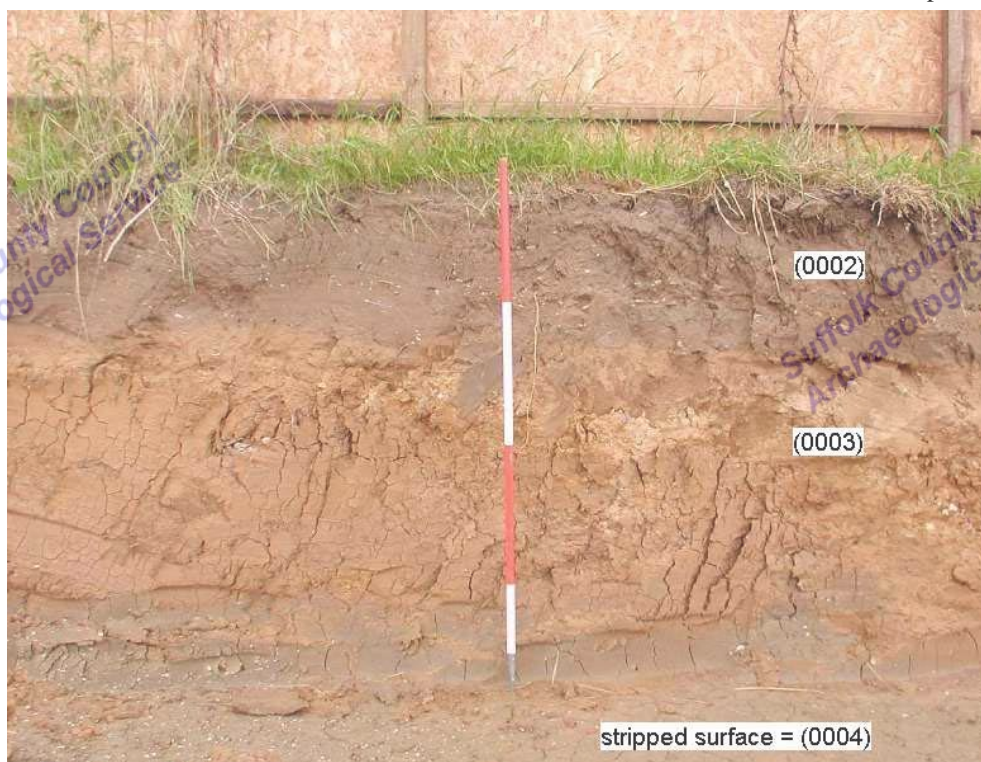


Figure 3. South-west facing sample section

During the third visit (31/08/04) an area of *c.* 750m² was examined in the south-eastern corner of the site. This area was broadly analogous with that which produced the finds scatter during the first visit. The prevailing slope meant that the reduction in level was much less (at *c.* 0.5m) in this part of the site. Consequently the exposed surface was close enough to the contact between deposits 0002 and 0003 that any archaeological features in the area should have been preserved/visible, particularly given the clean strip produced by the use of a ditching bucket. However, no further archaeological finds or incised features could be seen in this part of the site.

The Finds by Sue Anderson

Finds were all unstratified. The earliest material from the site consisted of five sherds of prehistoric pottery (22g, four flint tempered, one grog and flint tempered) and six worked flints (113g, two scrapers, a notched and retouched flake and three squat flakes with hinge fractures). These are all likely to be of Bronze Age date. Five fragments of burnt flint/sandstone were also probably associated with prehistoric occupation.

Later finds included a small sherd of medieval coarseware (2g, 13th/14th c.), a sherd of post-medieval redware (9g, probably modern), two fragments of ferrous and grog tempered brick (25g) and eight pieces of red firing plain roof tile (127g, one reduced, probably post-medieval).

Conclusions

Although no stratified archaeological deposits or incised features were encountered the finds recovered from the topsoil suggest that late prehistoric occupation is likely to have taken place within, or close to, the site.

Evidence for later activity is sparser, although some fragments of medieval and later brick and tile attest to the kiln sites indicated on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map.