

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2009/080

**Highfield Nursery, Chesterfield Drive, Ipswich
IPS 496**

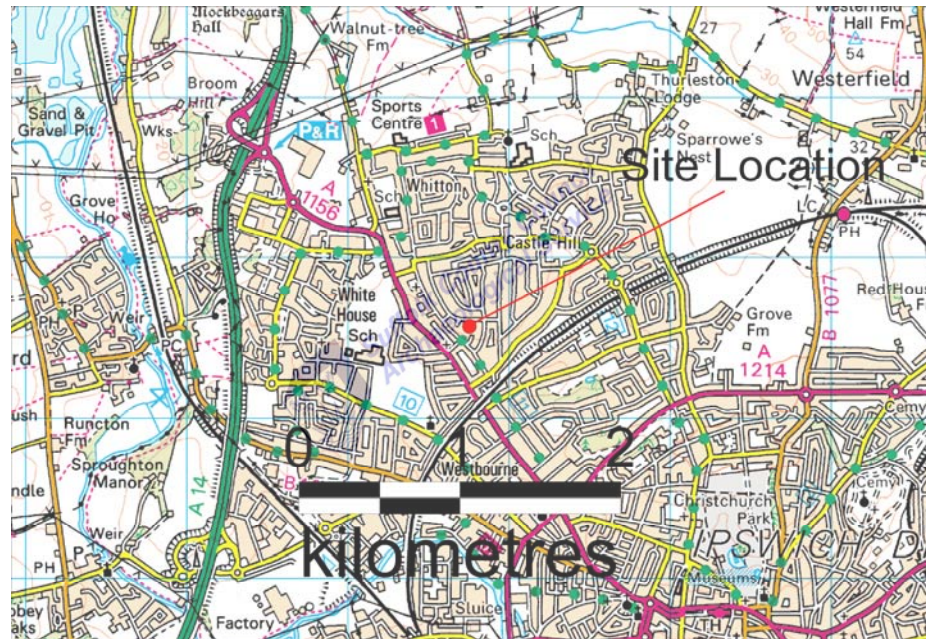


Figure 1. Site location

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HER Information

Planning Application No: IP/08/00485/FPC

Date of Fieldwork: 9th March, 2009

Grid Reference: TM 1478 4656

Funding Body: RM Property Suffolk County Council

Curatorial Officer: Judith Plouviez

Project Officer: Duncan Stirk

Oasis Reference: suffolkc1-56565



Summary

An archaeological monitoring was carried out on land at Highfield Nursery, Chesterfield Drive, Ipswich on March 9th 2009. The work was carried out in order to fulfil an archaeological condition attached to planning consent for the erection of an extension to the nursery. No deposits or archaeological features were recorded during the monitoring work, and it can be demonstrated that the extension lies entirely within a known extraction pit seen on early plans of the area. The extraction pit was filled with 20th century rubbish, none of which was retained.

1. Introduction and methodology

The construction of an extension to Highfield Nursery, Ipswich which is located at NGR TM 1478 4656, was subjected to archaeological monitoring as specified in a Brief and Specification produced by J. Plouviez of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team. The work was carried out as part of a condition placed upon the planning application (application No. IP/08/00485/FPC)

The extension involved ground reduction to a depth of c. 0.6m and excavation of footings between pile positions to a depth of between 1.2m to 1.4m. These ground-works were the focus of the archaeological monitoring as it was felt that they would adversely impact any surviving archaeological deposits in the area. The site is located in an area of a large Roman Villa complex (IPS 015), excavated during the 19th and 20th centuries. Also in the area is a large extraction pit (now filled) that is marked on early maps. Excavations on the northern edge of the extraction pit c.1950 revealed elements of the Villa complex, but as yet archaeological work at the nursery site has not re-found the Villa remains. Work in 2002 and 2006 identified the edges of the extraction pit, and a single pit of Roman date.

Excavation of the footings was carried out by a 360° mechanical excavator using a 0.4m wide toothed bucket under close archaeological supervision. Selected sections and the base of the trench were then hand cleaned to better determine the presence of archaeological features through changes in soil colour and consistency. The site was allocated the HER number IPS 496. All observed deposits were allocated unique context numbers and recorded on pro forma recording sheets. All drawn recording was carried out in 1:50 scale for plans and 1:20 or 1:10 scale section drawings, as appropriate. A photographic record of representative sections and trenches was made which, along with the written records, forms the archive, stored with SCCAS Bury St Edmunds. The illustrations were rendered using MapInfo mapping software.

Monitoring was discontinued after a single a foundation trench was excavated along the length of the extension, as it was apparent that the extension was positioned entirely within the extraction pit.



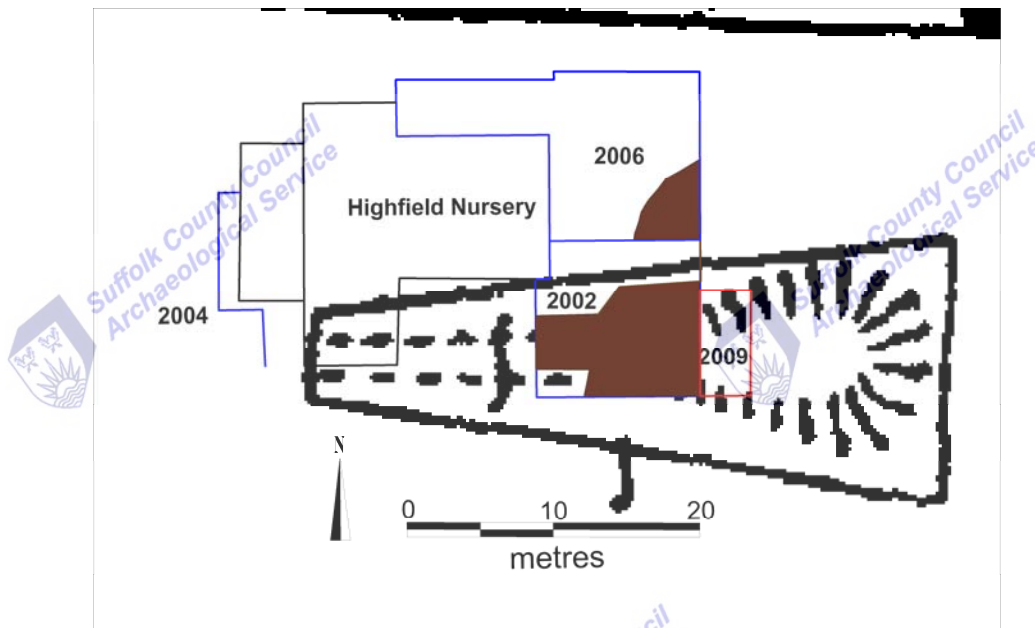


Figure 2. Location of extension (red) relative to extraction pit on 1920's map and previous phases of work.

2. Results

Trench 1 was 6.9m long by 0.5m wide, and varied in depth from between 0.95m to 1.44m. It was aligned north – south and was broken into two segments that were positioned between piles. In the southern segment a single deposit was observed to a depth of 1.2m. This was a dark pinkish brown sandy silt deposit with lenses of orangy brown rust (100). Deposit (100) contained many bottles, jars and other 20th century rubbish; none of which was retained. Deposit (100) was cut by a modern pipe trench containing mid brown sandy silt over gravel surrounding a plastic drain pipe (102). This was probably laid during the last extension work in 2002 or 2006, and ran roughly parallel with the trench.

The northern trench segment revealed a continuation of deposit (100) over a banded deposit of light yellow brown sand, orangy brown sand, and mid brown sand silt (101). Deposit (101) was seen at a depth of 0.8m and extending below the base of the trench at 1.4m. The banding or tip lines evident in deposit (101) dropped away to the south.

It is clear from the results of the monitoring that the extension lies entirely within the extraction pit known from historic maps, and found during previous work at the nursery site. Two fills of the extraction pit were recorded. The upper portion of the pit was certainly in-filled at some time in the 20th century, as evidenced by the huge number of bottles, jars and other rubbish in it. The banded sandy lower fill did not appear to contain modern rubbish, and therefore may relate to quarrying on the site. No archaeological deposits are likely to have survived where quarrying has taken place, and it is clear that the extension lies within the centre of the extraction pit as seen on the 1920's map. Previous archaeological work has also demonstrated that the quarrying was more extensive than was documented on the 1920's map. It is therefore felt that further monitoring of the ground-works will be unproductive.

Duncan Stirk

March 2009