

**St Mary's at the Elm, Elm Street,
Ipswich, Suffolk**

Faculty Ref: 2023-086119

HER Ref: IPS 276

Archaeological Monitoring Report

(Continuous observation of ground works)

(© John Newman BA MCIFA, 10 Fitzgerald Road, Bramford, Ipswich, IP8 4AA)

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(Tel: 07754 501033 Email: johnnewman2@btinternet.com)

Site details for HER

Name: St Mary at the Elm church, Elm Street, Ipswich, Suffolk

Client: St Mary at the Elm PCC

Local planning authority: Ipswich BC

Faculty ref: 2023-086119 (issued by the Consistory Court of the Diocese and Official Principal of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich)

Works: Creation of a French drain on northern side of the nave

Date of fieldwork: 19 & 20 February, 2024

HER Ref: IPS 276

LBS: 1037764 (Grade II*)

Grid ref: TM 1607 4455

OASIS ref: johnnewm1-522754

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Summary: Ipswich, St Mary at the Elm, Elm Street (IPS 126, TM 1607 4455) monitoring of trenching for a French drain on the northern side of the nave did not reveal any archaeological features and remained in topsoil to a depth of 600mm. A small quantity of Post medieval sherds and clay tobacco pipe fragments were recovered as stray finds; no burials were exposed though a few loose bone fragments were found and were re-buried on site (John Newman Archaeological Services for St Mary at the Elm, Elm Street, Ipswich).

1.1 St Mary at the Elm's PCC commissioned John Newman Archaeological Services (JNAS) to undertake the archaeological monitoring of trenching works required under a condition for a programme of archaeological works under faculty 2023-086119 (See Appendix II). The trenching works for a French drain to be laid next to the north wall of the nave is aimed to solve a damp problem within the church which is located on the northern side Elm Street, Ipswich (see Fig. 1) and is in the historic core of the town where settlement was established in the middle Saxon period and grew through the medieval and Post medieval periods.

1.2 St Mary at the Elm church on the northern side of Elm Street is located towards the western edge of the historic Saxon and medieval core of Ipswich and is a grade II* listed building. The church is listed (LBS 1037764) as having an 11th to 12th century AD origin with a south door of this date. The main structure in the nave is of a later medieval re-build date with the north aisle described as being of late 15th or early 16th century date with a tower to the west of 16th century date. Later building work then was carried out at the east end of the church in the 19th century with the chancel. As noted above the north aisle is of 15th-16th century date with the third bay containing the remains of the medieval north transept.

2. Monitoring methodology

2.1 The excavation of the drain trench was undertaken by hand and this work was monitored as it was taking place and the upcast spoil was examined for stray finds. The base and sides of the trench were also examined for archaeological deposits and features. To record the monitoring a number of photographs (see Appendix I) were also taken.

3. Results

3.1 In total 13m of 600mm wide and 600mm deep trench (see Fig. 2 & Appendix I) was opened and this revealed a uniform dark-brown sandy topsoil type loam with no archaeological features or variation in the deposit being apparent. A small number of pottery sherds and clay tobacco pipe fragments (see section 4 below) were recovered from the upcast spoil; in addition a few small fragments of bone were found in the spoil and these were reburied within the trench. No evidence for in situ human burial was revealed in the trench.

4. The Finds

4.1 St Mary at the Elms Church, Ipswich (IPS 276): ceramics
(Sue Anderson, February 2024).

Pottery

Thirty-four sherds of pottery (1092g) were collected as unstratified finds 0020. Quantification was carried out using sherd count, weight and estimated vessel equivalent (eve). The minimum number of vessels (MNV) within each context was also recorded, but cross-fitting was not attempted unless particularly distinctive

vessels were observed in more than one context. A full quantification by fabric, context and feature is available in archive. All fabric codes were assigned from the author's post-Roman fabric series for Suffolk (Anderson 2020). Methods follow MPRG recommendations (MPRG 2001) and form terminology follows MPRG classifications (1998). (The results were input directly onto an MS Access database which forms the archive catalogue).

Table 1 shows the quantities of pottery by fabric.

Fabric	Code	Date range	No	Wt/g	Eve	MNV
Late medieval Colchester ware	COLL	15th-16th c.	1	26	0.15	1
Frechen stoneware	FREC	16th-17th c.	6	131		4
Glazed red earthenware	GRE	16th-18th c.	7	398	0.10	4
Border ware	BORD	16th-18th c.	6	156	0.18	6
Tin-glazed earthenware	TGE	16th-18th c.	5	98		4
Speckle-glazed ware	SPEC	17th-18th c.	2	235	0.07	2
Staffordshire-type slipware	STAF	L.17th-18th c.	1	16		1
Westerwald stoneware	WEST	L.17th-19th c.	1	3		1
Staffordshire-type stoneware	ESWS		2	16	0.15	2
Creamware	CRW	18th-E.19th c.	1	5		1
Pearlware	PEW	L.18th-19th c.	2	8	0.07	2
<i>Totals</i>			<i>34</i>	<i>1092</i>	<i>0.72</i>	<i>28</i>

Table 1. Pottery fabric quantities in approximate date order.

The earliest sherd was a rim fragment of a late medieval Colchester-type ware jug with a cream-coloured slipped line below the rim and spots of clear glaze externally on the rim and body.

Post-medieval wares included a range of locally made earthenwares and imported stonewares. Fragments of four Frechen vessels included two bases and two body sherds, one of which had a partial heraldic medallion. The GRE included a rim fragment from a dripping pan, two sherds of a bowl with incised wavy line decoration on the thickened everted rim, and three fragments of a large cistern base with bung-hole. Fragments of whitewares were probably all Surrey-Hampshire Border ware and included a yellow-glazed bed pan fragment (*cf.* Pearce 1992, fig. 46, no. 446), a yellow-glazed thickened everted rim from an uncertain form, a yellow-glazed rim/shoulder from a straight-sided jar (*cf. ibid.*, fig. 44, no. 419), a brown-glazed plate rim and two bright green-glazed body sherds. Five fragments of tin-glazed wares included three in a red fabric with poor external glaze (two from a single vessel with blue painted decoration, one from a foot-ring base with yellowish decoration), another foot-ring/concave base with blue decoration internally, and a plain body

sherd from which all trace of glaze had been lost. The speckle-glazed wares comprised a large sherd of the rim/handle of a large storage vessel, and a flat base of a smaller vessel. A Staffordshire slipware plate rim was also found.

Modern wares comprised a small body fragment of Westerwald stoneware with cobalt blue decoration, a mug rim and tankard fragment in Staffordshire-type stoneware, a body fragment of creamware and two transfer-printed pearlware fragments (one with willow pattern decoration and the other a small bowl rim with a scenic print).

This assemblage is typical of post-medieval and early modern assemblages from Ipswich, containing a wide variety of local and non-local wares, including some common imports. It may represent soil imported into the churchyard to raise the levels for new burial at some point in the 19th century.

4.2 Clay tobacco pipe

Fifty-six fragments (427g) of clay pipes were collected under the unstratified context 0020 (Appendix 2). The fragments included fifteen bowls, some with heels and stems still attached, the remainder being stem fragments. The earliest bowl dates to c.1610–60, being a slightly larger version of the earliest form of clay pipe (slightly globular), but the majority are larger types which date between the mid-17th and mid-18th centuries. Most have plain oval or circular heels. Three heels had maker's initials on either side, but only one was legible. This was 'B S', possibly for Benjamin Skeet of Ipswich (1699-1740) (Oswald 1975, 194) – the shape of the bowl of this pipe suggests a date range of 1720–50. Stem bore diameters were measured and ranged between 1.9mm and 3.7mm, the largest being the bore diameter of the earliest bowl. The bore sizes indicate a similar date range to the bowl shapes. Like the pottery, it is possible that this material was imported to the site in soil intended to level or build up the churchyard.

5. Conclusion

5.1 While this trenching work for a new drain was undertaken in a churchyard and adjacent to a church of historical importance no deposits of archaeological significance were disturbed and no in situ burials were revealed.

References

Anderson, S., 2020, *Suffolk Medieval Pottery Fabric Series*,
<https://www.suffolkmedpot.co.uk/>

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Oswald, A., 1975, *Clay Pipes for the Archaeologist*, British Archaeological Reports, British Series 14, Oxford

Pearce, J., 1992, *Border Wares. Post-medieval pottery in London, 1500-1700, Volume 1*. London: HMSO.

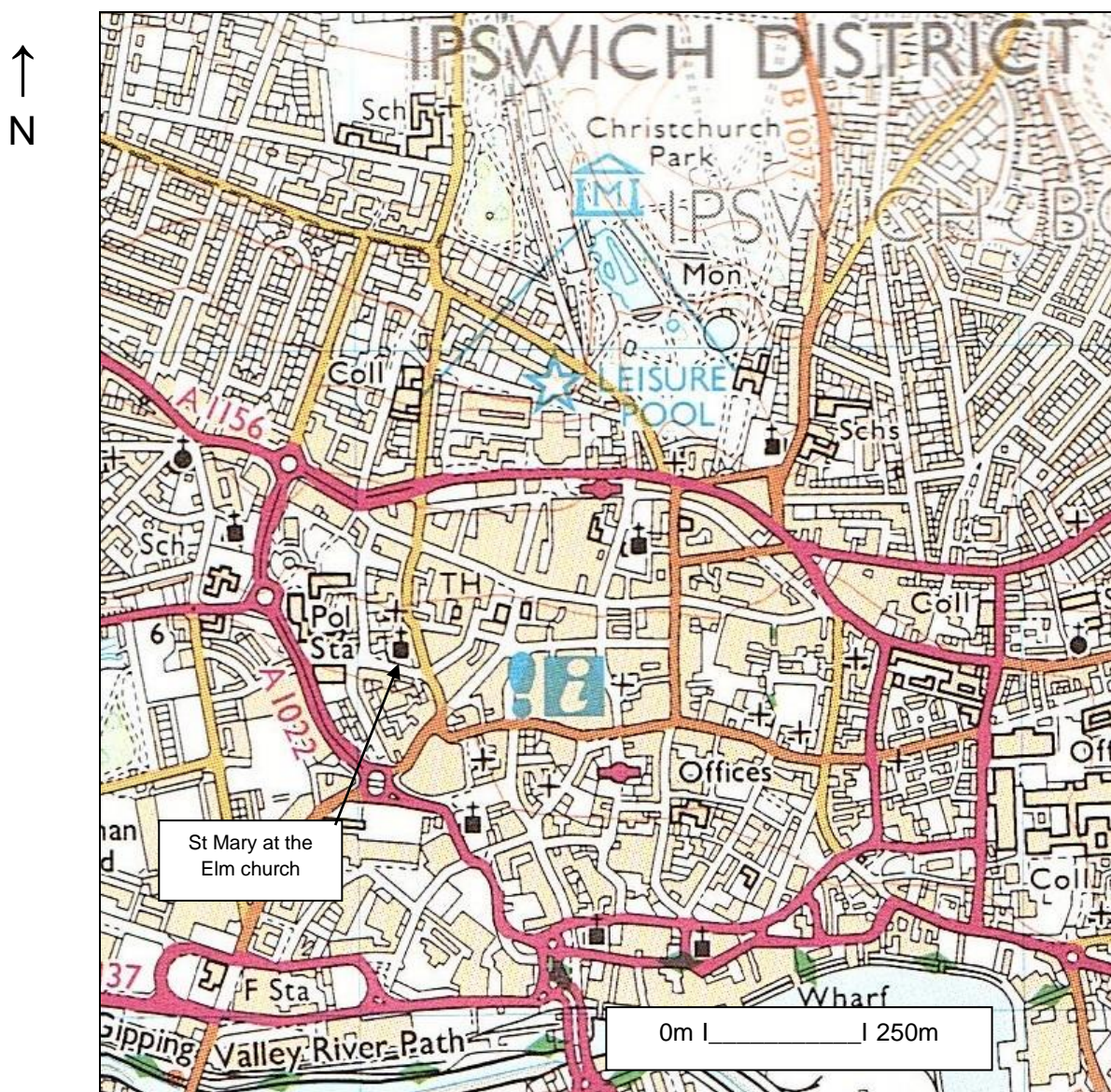


Fig.1 : Site location Fig. 1: Site location (Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2006 All rights reserved Licence No 100049722)

Anderson, S., 2020, *Suffolk Medieval Pottery Fabric Series*, <https://www.suffolkmedpot.co.uk/>

MPRG, 1998, *A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms*, Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper 1

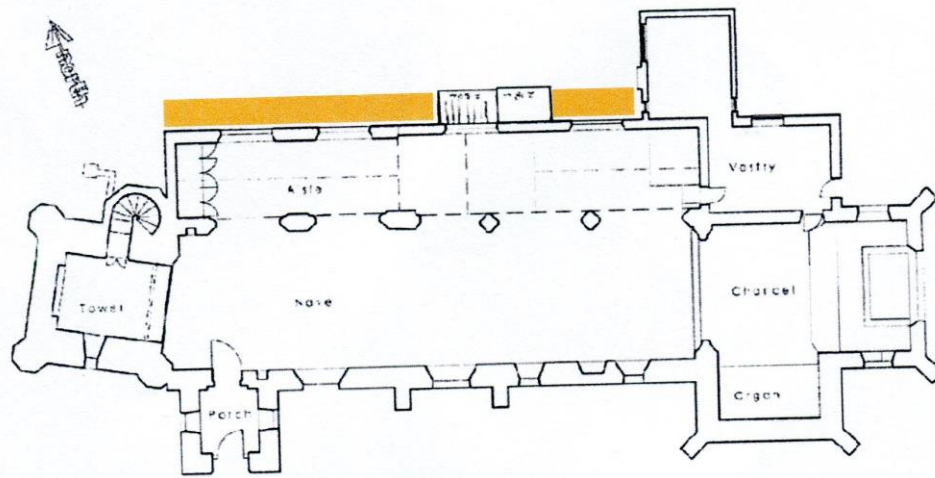
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Oswald, A., 1975, *Clay Pipes for the Archaeologist*, British Archaeological Reports, British Series 14, Oxford

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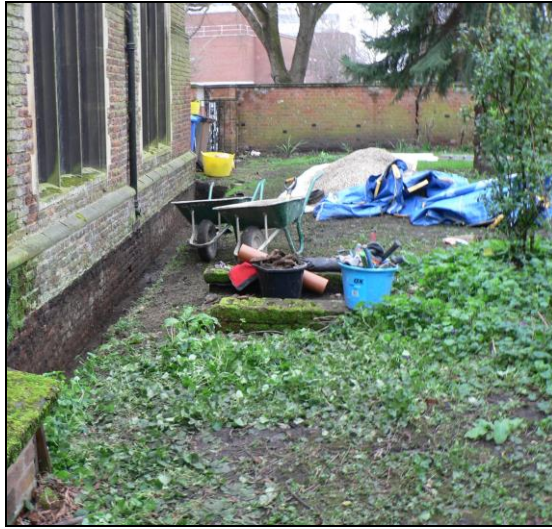


Ground Floor Plan

0m | _____ | 10m

Fig. 2: Monitored drain trench location

Appendix I- Images



General view from east



Trench from west