

Land to the rear of 92-112 Milton Road Sutton Courtenay



Archaeological Evaluation Report



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Land to the Rear of 92-112 Milton Road, Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Written by Chris Pickard and illustrated by Julia Collins

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Summary

In April 2013, Oxford Archaeology carried out archaeological evaluation at Land to the Rear of 92-112 Milton Road, Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire, on behalf of Pye Homes.

A single undated ditch was revealed in the north-western part of the site. No other archaeological features or deposits were present.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Details

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology South (OAS) was commissioned by Pye Homes to undertake an archaeological evaluation of Land to the Rear of 92-112 Milton Road, Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire (centred on SU 49403 92959).
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken to inform the Planning Authority in advance of submission of a Planning Application. A brief was set by Hugh Coddington of Oxfordshire County Council detailing the Local Authority's requirements for work necessary to inform the planning process (OCC 2013). A Written Scheme of Investigation for the works (Oxford Archaeology 2013) was submitted to, and approved by, Hugh Coddington.
- 1.1.3 All work was undertaken in accordance with local and national planning policies.

1.2 Location and scope of work

- 1.2.1 The site lies to the north and rear of properties that line the northern edge of Milton Road on the south western edge of the village of Sutton Courtenay (Fig. 1). The evaluation consisted of the excavation of eleven trenches.

1.3 Geology and topography

- 1.3.1 The area of proposed development currently consists of arable land, bounded to the north, west and east by open fields and to the south by the garden plots of the houses along Milton Road.
- 1.3.2 The geology of the area is Summertown-Radley sand and gravels, overlying Mudstone of the Gault Formation .

1.4 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.4.1 The archaeological and historical background to the site has been described in detail in a desk-based assessment (Oxford Archaeology 2013), and is not reproduced here.
- 1.4.2 The desk-based assessment noted that the wider area contains a concentration of cropmark evidence, thought to represent archaeological features dating from the Neolithic through to the later medieval period. Although absent from the site, the presence of these features did however suggest that there was a potential for the site to contain similar features.
- 1.4.3 The site itself contains a circular ring cropmark c. 14m in diameter. Features of this type can represent evidence of prehistoric settlement or burial activity but this cropmark was not clearly defined and was only marked upon one run of aerial photographs suggesting that it may be of natural origin, possibly representing an area of fungal growth (a 'fairy ring').
- 1.4.4 Aerial photographic evidence also showed that the area (although not the site itself) was previously extensively covered by ridge and furrow earthworks. There was, therefore, potential for the ditches of former ploughed-out systems to exist within the site as sub-surface features.

1.5 Acknowledgements

- 1.5.1 OA would like to thank Pye Homes who commissioned the work and Hugh Coddington, the Principal Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council, who monitored the



evaluation. The project was managed by Ken Welsh for OA and the fieldwork was undertaken by Chris Pickard assisted by Jim Harris and Natalie Anderson.



2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The aim of the evaluation, as set out in the brief was to gather sufficient information to establish the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within those areas affected by the proposed development.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 A summary of OA's general approach to excavation and recording can be found in Appendix A of the Written Scheme of Investigation (Oxford Archaeology 2013).
- 2.2.2 The evaluation consisted of eleven trenches (Fig. 2), each measuring c. 30 m by 1.8m. Trench 6 was moved slightly to the east to avoid damaging a tree.
- 2.2.3 The trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under the close supervision of an archaeologist. Mechanical excavation took place in level spits to the top of natural gravels and/or natural clay.
- 2.2.4 Any potential archaeological features were then cleaned and excavated by hand and were sampled sufficiently to characterise and date them.



3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 Individual trench details including sizes, orientations and depths are given in Appendix A. General stratigraphic data, ground conditions and the distribution of archaeological features are contained in the sections below.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 All trenches were excavated through up to 0.15m of topsoil which overlay a mid grey brown or yellow brown silty clay subsoil, up to 0.5m thick. Several trenches contained land drains of the 'horseshoe'-shaped ceramic variety or thin channels filled with gravel.

3.2.2 The subsoil overlay the natural geology which generally consisted of yellow orange gravelly sand with bands of pale grey and mid to light grey clay.

3.2.3 The trenches in the northern part of the site partially filled with ground water after they were excavated (principally Trenches 2, 3 and 4). The trenches to the south remained relatively dry. However sufficient time was available to establish the presence/absence of archaeological features in all of the excavated trenches.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 A single ditch was found in Trench 1 in the north-western part of the site. No other archaeological features or deposits were present.

3.4 Trench 1

3.4.1 This trench contained a ditch (103), orientated NW-SE, and 1.6m wide by 0.4m deep (Plate 1). It contained two fills (104 and 105) but did not produce any artefactual material. The ditch was cut from beneath the subsoil suggesting that it is not of recent origin.



4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 4.1.1 Ground conditions were sufficiently good in all of the trenches to identify the presence or absence of archaeological features. The trenches to the north of the site partially filled with ground water over time but it was clear that no archaeological features were present in these trenches.
- 4.1.2 It is therefore felt that the recorded density and distribution of archaeological features provides an accurate representation of the evaluation area as a whole.

4.2 Interpretation

- 4.2.1 The single ditch in Trench 1 was undated although the fact that it was cut from beneath a layer of subsoil suggests that it is not of recent origin. Given its form and the lack of artefactual material, it is likely that the ditch is a former field boundary. No artefactual material was recovered from the overlying subsoil to suggest when it formed. It is, however, likely to be a former ploughsoil, perhaps of medieval or post-medieval date.
- 4.2.2 The possible poorly defined cropmark (OA23) discussed in the desk-based assessment was targeted by Trench 3. No archaeological features were visible in this trench although slight changes in the underlying natural geology were observed that may have resulted in the formation of the cropmark.



APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description				Orientation		N-S
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of gravelly sand with mid grey brown clay bands				Avg. depth (m)		0.44
				Width (m)		1.8
				Length (m)		30
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	0.14	Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.5	Subsoil	-	-
102	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
103	Cut	1.6	0.4	Ditch	-	-
104	Fill	1.47	0.2	Fill of 103	-	-
105	Fill	1.08	0.2	Fill of 103	-	-

Trench 2						
General description				Orientation		E-W
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of gravelly sand with mid grey brown clay bands				Avg. depth (m)		0.4
				Width (m)		1.8
				Length (m)		30
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
200	Layer	-	0.14	Topsoil	-	-
201	Layer	-	0.5	Subsoil	-	-
202	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 3						
General description				Orientation		N-S
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of gravelly sand with mid grey brown clay bands				Avg. depth (m)		0.44
				Width (m)		1.9
				Length (m)		29.3
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
300	Layer	-	0.1	Topsoil	-	-
301	Layer	-	0.2	Subsoil	-	-



302	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
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Trench 4						
General description				Orientation		E-W
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of gravelly sand with mid grey brown clay bands				Avg. depth (m)		0.4
				Width (m)		1.8
				Length (m)		30
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
400	Layer	-	0.16	Topsoil	-	-
401	Layer	-	0.25	Subsoil	-	-
402	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 5						
General description				Orientation		N-S
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of gravelly sand with mid grey brown clay bands				Avg. depth (m)		0.3
				Width (m)		1.8
				Length (m)		30
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
500	Layer	-	0.12	Topsoil	-	-
501	Layer	-	0.23	Subsoil	-	-
502	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 6						
General description				Orientation		N-S
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of gravelly sand with mid grey brown clay bands				Avg. depth (m)		0.3
				Width (m)		1.9
				Length (m)		30
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
600	Layer	-	0.1	Topsoil	-	-
601	Layer	-	0.2	Subsoil	-	-
602	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 7						
General description				Orientation		E-W



Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of gravelly sand with mid grey brown clay bands		Avg. depth (m)	0.3			
		Width (m)	1.8			
		Length (m)	30			
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
700	Layer	-	0.1	Topsoil	-	-
701	Layer	-	0.2	Subsoil	-	-
702	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 8						
General description				Orientation	E-W	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of gravelly sand with mid grey brown clay bands				Avg. depth (m)	0.4	
				Width (m)	1.8	
				Length (m)	30	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
800	Layer	-	0.1	Topsoil	-	-
801	Layer	-	0.3	Subsoil	-	-
802	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 9						
General description				Orientation	N-S	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of gravelly sand with mid grey brown clay bands				Avg. depth (m)	0.35	
				Width (m)	1.8	
				Length (m)	30	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
900	Layer	-	0.16	Topsoil	-	-
901	Layer	-	0.2	Subsoil	-	-
902	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 10						
General description				Orientation	N-S	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of gravelly sand with mid grey brown clay bands				Avg. depth (m)	0.4	
				Width (m)	1.8	
				Length (m)	30	
Contexts						



context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1001	Layer	-	0.15	Topsoil	-	-
1001	Layer	-	0.26	Subsoil	-	-
1002	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 11						
General description				Orientation		N-S
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of gravelly sand with mid grey brown clay bands				Avg. depth (m)		0.4
				Width (m)		1.8
				Length (m)		30
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1100	Layer	-	0.15	Topsoil	-	-
1101	Layer	-	0.25	Subsoil	-	-
1102	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-



APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Oxford Archaeology, 2013 Land to the rear of 92-112 Milton Road, Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Evaluation.

Oxford Archaeology, 2013, Land to the rear of 92-112 Milton Road, Sutton Courtenay: Cultural Heritage Assessment

Oxfordshire County Council, 92-112 Milton road, Sutton Courtenay: Design Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation



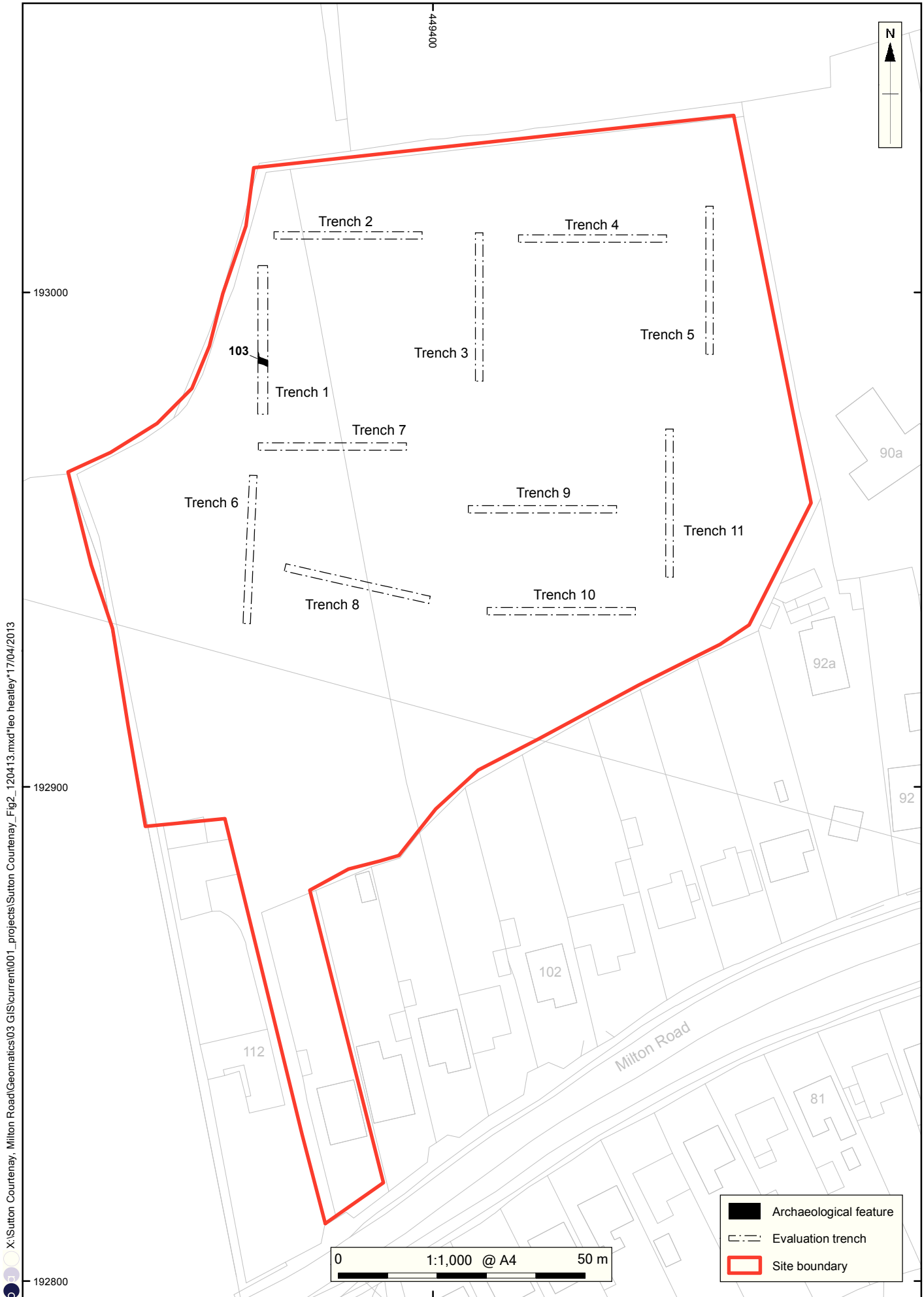
APPENDIX C. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Land to the Rear of 92-112 Milton Road, Sutton Courtenay
Site code:	SCMR 13
Grid reference:	SU 49403 92959
Type:	Evaluation
Date and duration:	8th to 10th April 2013
Area of site:	1.7 hectares
Summary of results:	An undated shallow E-W aligned ditch was located in Trench 1. No other archaeological features or deposits were present.
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the Oxfordshire County Museum in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS:2013.38



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Figure 1: Site location



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Figure 2: Trench locations



Plate 1: Trench 1, Ditch 103



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