

Cossington Service Station Aylesford Kent



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Oxford Archaeology

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ATKINS

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Aylesford, Kent*****ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT*****CONTENTS**

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SUMMARY

On the 26th April 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Cossington Service Station, Aylesford, Kent (NGR: TQ 75135 60282). The work was commissioned by Atkins in advance of ground excavations for new underground fuel storage tank and associated services. The watching brief found no evidence for archaeological remains or activity predating the former modern agricultural use of the site.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 On the 26th April 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the Cossington Service Station, Aylesford, Kent (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Atkins in respect of a planning application for replacement fuel tanks, petrol interceptor and ancillary works. (Planning Application No. TH/03/0720)
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by the Heritage Conservation Group of Kent County Council (KCC 2004) and OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief. (OA 2004)

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 Cossington Service Station is situated on the eastern side of the A229, Maidstone to Chatham road lying on a general south facing slope (NGR: TQ 75135 60282). The site is bounded to the west by the A229, to the east by what was originally farmland (now part of CTRL mitigation land), to the north by a modern cutting containing an underpass for the Pilgrims Way and to the south by a private road. The site lies on colluvial deposits overlying Middle Chalk at approximately 50 m OD. The site is presently a concrete forecourt and occupies an area of roughly 0.1 of a hectare.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared in the WSI (OA, 2004) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The site lies within an area containing important evidence of prehistoric activity. A number of Neolithic tombs are recorded within a 200 m radius of the site including a scheduled site (SMR no. TQ 76 SE 11). Further features of Bronze Age, Iron Age, Romano-British and medieval date are also known in the vicinity. Many of these features, including a Neolithic longhouse were discovered during recent work on a nearby stretch of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link.
- 1.3.3 The famous Neolithic chambered tomb of Kits Coty and an Iron Age settlement are also known 700 m to the west. It is considered possible that further evidence of a

prehistoric mortuary landscape or evidence from other periods may be preserved on the site in spite of past disturbance.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the development area.
- 2.1.2 To identify and record the extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains, if any, in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The existing storage tanks and their related foundations and pipework were excavated by a 21 ton tracked excavator fitted with a 1.2 m wide toothed bucket. This machine also excavated the extension to the area to the storage tanks under archaeological supervision. During this work both the base and sections of the excavation were closely observed and the spoil examined for artefacts and dating evidence.
- 2.2.2 The trenches for the new pipework was excavated by a 4 ton Kubota mini-digger fitted with a 0.6 m wide toothed bucket under archaeological supervision in spits down to finished depth.
- 2.2.3 The new interceptor tank was to be installed within the footprint of the existing tank with no new excavation required.
- 2.2.4 A plan of the extent of the excavations was drawn at a scale of 1:200 (Fig. 2) and sample sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. A full photographic record of the work was made using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was also made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Fieldwork Manual* (OAU 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 All the excavation areas displayed similar stratigraphy with the surface of the underlying chalk natural (104) at a depth of between 0.3 m and 0.8m below ground level (Fig. 3, Sections 1 and 2). The natural chalk was observed in the tank trench to be in excess of 3 m deep.
- 3.1.2 Overlying the natural was a layer of colluvium (103), a mixture of pale brown fine silts with numerous small fragments of chalk. Measuring between 0.1 m and 0.2 m deep it was seen to increase in depth towards the base of the natural slope of the site.

There was no layer of buried soil observed between the colluvium and the natural chalk suggesting 103 to be of post-glacial origin.

- 3.1.3 In both the sections recorded 103 was sealed by a 0.15 m thick layer of compacted chalk (102). This may represent eroded chalk washed down and redeposited over the area, or possibly plough disturbed natural.
- 3.1.4 A subsoil measuring 0.1 m to 0.15 m depth consisting of a friable pale orange brown sandy silt (101) overlaid 102, representing an earlier ploughing horizon. This was sealed by a thin (7.5mm) layer of tenacious dark brown silt (100), representing the topsoil. This layer was observed underneath the concrete forecourt during the excavation of the pipe trenches.

3.2 **Finds**

- 3.2.1 No finds or dating evidence was recovered during the watching brief.

3.3 **Palaeo-environmental remains**

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for paleo-environmental sampling were identified during the course of the watching brief.

4 **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1.1 The watching brief showed that only a limited amount of activity has taken place within the area of the brief, all of which can be accounted for by modern agricultural practises.
- 4.1.2 The known, adjacent sites of archaeological activity, specifically the Neolithic settlement recorded during the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) were not observed to have extended into the development area.
- 4.1.3 The colluvial deposits appear to be immediately post-glacial in origin and did not appear to seal earlier archaeological landscapes.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
100	Layer	0.0 - 0.1 m	Topsoil/Turf	-	C20th
101	Layer	0.1 - 0.25 m	Subsoil, Earlier ploughsoil	-	-
102	Layer	0.25 - 0.4 m	Redeposited, colluvial chalk	-	-
103	Layer	0.4 - 0.6 m	Colluvium	-	-
104	Layer	0.6 -> 4.0 m	Natural chalk	-	-

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

IFA 1992 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

KCC 2004 *Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief During the Replacement of Existing Fuel Storage Tanks and Petrol Interceptor Along with various works to Forecourt of Existing Petrol Station at Cossington Service Station, Bluebell Hill, Aylesford in Kent*

OAU 1992 *Fieldwork Manual (ed. Wilkinson D)*

OA 2004 *Cossington Service Station, Aylesford, Kent - Written Scheme of Investigation*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Cossington Service Station, Aylesford, Kent

Site code: AYCROSS 04

Grid reference: TQ 75135 60282

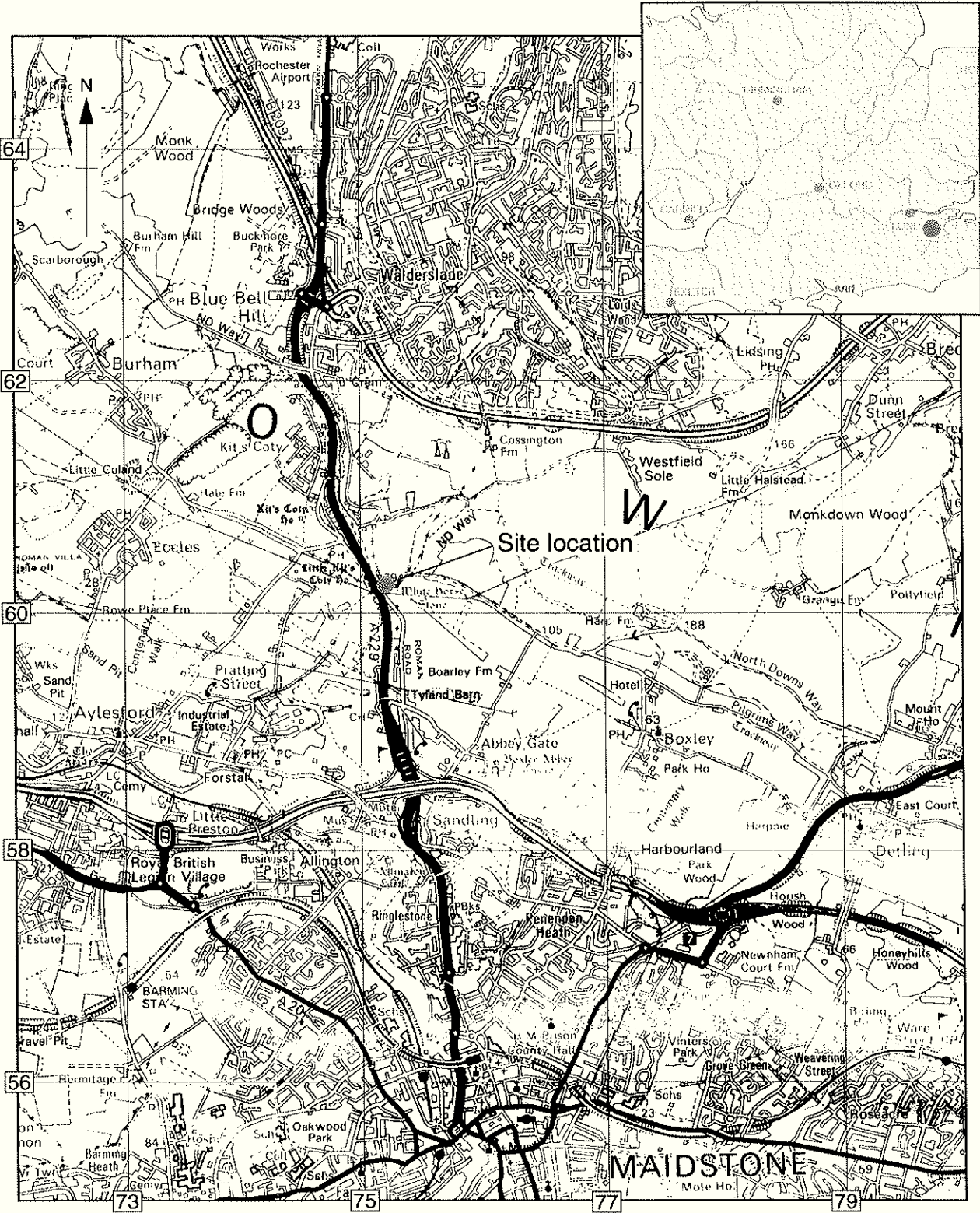
Type of watching brief: Excavation of service trench for new fuel storage tanks, interceptor tank and ancillary pipe trenches.

Date and duration of project: 26.04.04

Area of site: 0.1 of a hectare

Summary of results: Modern agricultural soils overlying colluvial and natural chalk deposits. No archaeological activity was observed.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with an appropriate Museums Service in due course.



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location

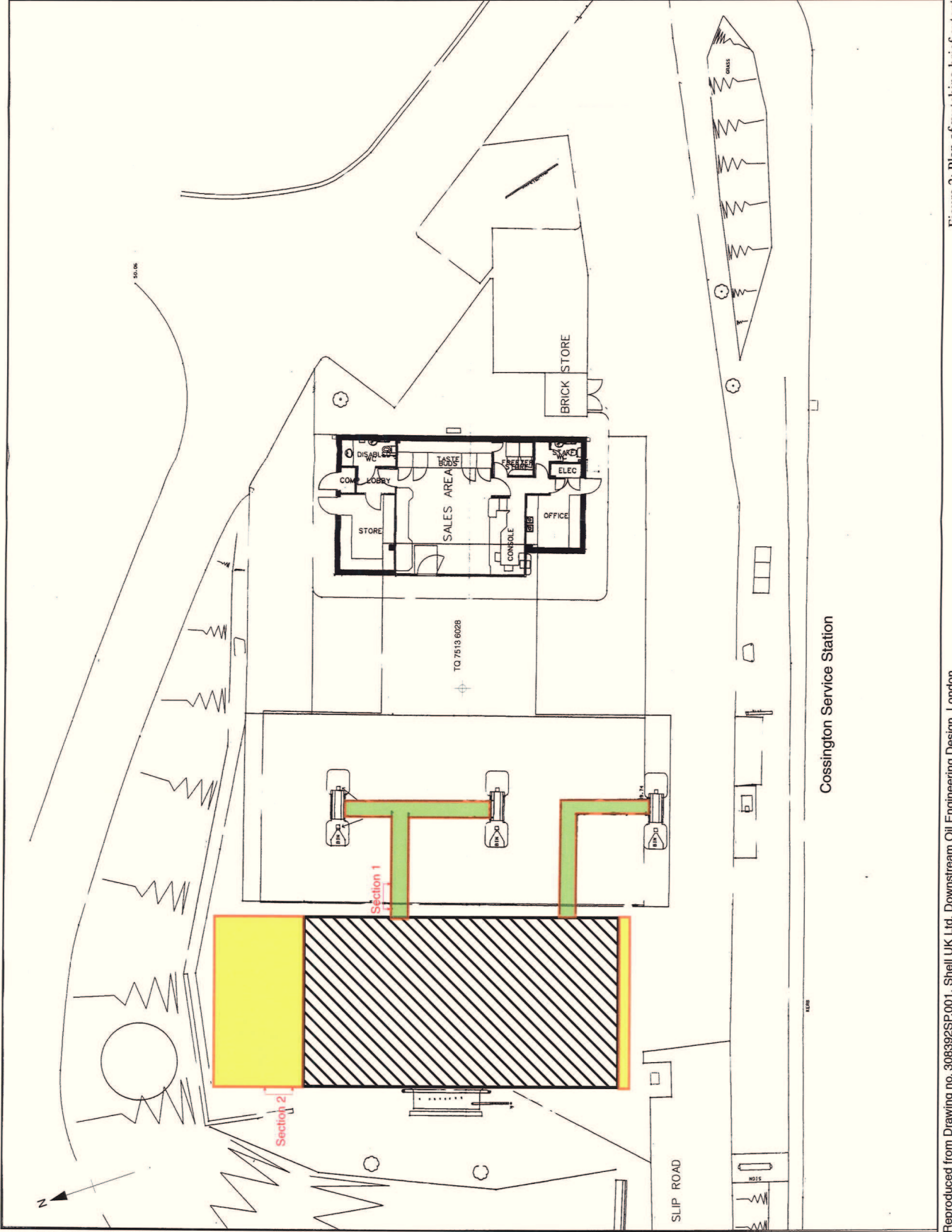


Figure 2: Plan of watching brief extent

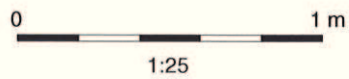
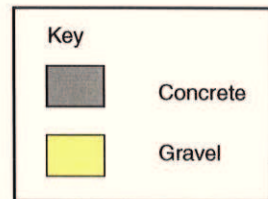
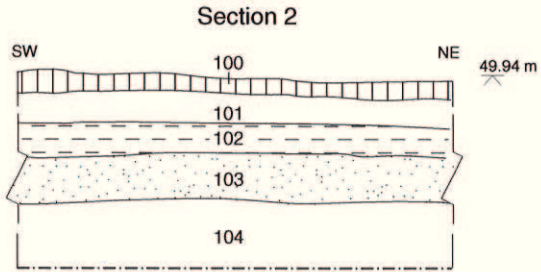
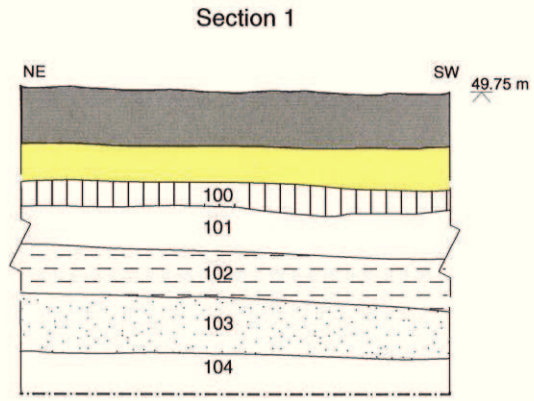


Figure 3: Service trenches, sections 1 and 2



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