



# Land Off Eastward Road, Great Malvern, Worcestershire

## Archaeological Excavation Report

February 2019

**Client: Lioncourt Homes Ltd**

Issue No: 1

OA Reference No: TN:22260

NGR: SO 78134 48551

oxfordarchaeology




southsouthsouth



Client Name: Lioncourt Homes Ltd  
Document Title: Land Off Eastward Road, Great Malvern, Worcestershire  
Document Type: Excavation Report  
Report No.: 1  
Grid Reference: SO 78134 48551  
Planning Reference: 13/01587/OUT  
Site Code: WSM70796  
Invoice Code: MAEREX  
Receiving Body: Worcestershire Museums  
Accession No.: WSM70796

OA Document File Location: \\10.0.10.86\Projects\m\Malvern Eastward Road\Reports\EX  
OA Graphics File Location: \\10.0.10.86\Projects\m\Malvern Eastward Road\010Geomatics

Issue No: 1  
Date: February 2019  
Prepared by: Tom Black (Project Officer)  
Checked by: John Boothroyd (Senior Project Manager)  
Edited by: Edward Biddulph (Senior Project Manager, Post-excavation)  
Approved for Issue by: David Score (Head of Fieldwork)  
Signature:



**Disclaimer:**

*This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.*

**OA South**

Janus House  
Osney Mead  
Oxford  
OX2 0ES

t. +44 (0)1865 263 800

**OA East**

15 Trafalgar Way  
Bar Hill  
Cambridge  
CB23 8SG

t. +44 (0)1223 850 500

**OA North**

Mill 3  
Moor Lane Mills  
Moor Lane  
Lancaster  
LA1 1QD

t. +44 (0)1524 880 250

e. [info@oxfordarch.co.uk](mailto:info@oxfordarch.co.uk)

w. [oxfordarchaeology.com](http://oxfordarchaeology.com)

Oxford Archaeology is a registered Charity: No. 285627



## Land off Eastward Road, Great Malvern, Worcestershire

### *Archaeological Excavation Report*

*Written by Tom Black and John Boothroyd*

*With contributions from Sharon Cook and illustrations by  
Conan Parsons and Charles Rousseaux*

## Contents

Summary .....	vii
Acknowledgements .....	viii
<b>1 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Scope of work.....	1
1.2 Location, topography and geology.....	1
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	1
1.4 Previous archaeological investigations .....	2
<b>2 EXCAVATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Aims .....	4
2.2 Methodology.....	4
<b>3 RESULTS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1 Introduction and presentation of results .....	5
3.2 General soils and ground conditions.....	5
3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits.....	5
3.4 Area 1 (Fig. 2; Plate 4) .....	5
3.5 Area 2 (Fig. 3; Plate 4) .....	5
3.6 Finds and environmental summary.....	6
<b>4 DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
4.1 Reliability of field investigation.....	7
4.2 Excavation objectives and results .....	7
<b>APPENDIX A AREA DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>APPENDIX B ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS.....</b>	<b>10</b>
B.1 Environmental Samples.....	10
<b>APPENDIX C BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>APPENDIX D SITE SUMMARY DETAILS.....</b>	<b>12</b>

## List of Figures

Fig. 1	Site location
Fig. 2	Area 1
Fig. 3	Area 2
Fig. 4	Sections 2000, 2001, 3000 and 3001

## List of Plates

Plate 1	Area 1
Plate 2	Pit 2002, view to east
Plate 3	Posthole 2000, view to NNW
Plate 4	Area 2
Plate 5	Ditch 3003, view to NNE



## Summary

Oxford Archaeology undertook a small excavation on the site of a proposed residential development at Eastward Road, Great Malvern, Worcestershire. The works comprised the excavation of two areas targeted on possible ditches recorded during the previously completed trial trench evaluation.

In Area 1 the targeted feature was found to be a pit rather than a ditch as previously suspected. A second pit and a posthole were also recorded in this area. In Area 2 the ditch was confirmed but no further features were identified. None of the features excavated during this phase of works produced any artefacts.

## Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Lioncourt Homes Ltd for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Aidan Smyth, who monitored the work on behalf of Wychavon and Malvern Hills District Councils, for his advice and guidance.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by John Boothroyd. The fieldwork was directed by John Carne, who was supported by Belle Nielson. Survey and digitising was carried out by John Carne and Conan Parsons. Thanks are also extended to the teams of OA staff that processed the environmental remains under the management of Rebecca Nicholson, and prepared the archive under the management of Nicola Scott.



## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Lioncourt Homes Ltd to undertake an archaeological excavation at the site of a proposed residential development.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of planning permission (planning ref. 13/01587/OUT). Although the local planning authority did not set a brief for the work, discussions with Aidan Smyth, Archaeology and Planning Advisor to Wychavon and Malvern Hills District Councils, established the scope of work required. This document outlines how OA implemented those requirements.
- 1.1.3 All work was undertaken in accordance with the written scheme of investigation produced by Oxford Archaeology and approved by Aidan Smyth (OA 2018a), and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' standard and guidance (CifA 2014).

### 1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site lies north of the town of Great Malvern, Worcestershire (Fig. 1; NGR: SO 78134 48551).
- 1.2.2 The area of proposed development measures approximately 2.95 hectares (ha) and is divided into two adjoining areas, with scrubland to the west and woodland to the east. The site is bounded to the south by Sycamore Close and agricultural land, to the west by Eastward Road, and to the north and east by agricultural land. The site is generally flat and lies approximately 65m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 1.2.3 The geology of the area is mapped as the Sidmouth Mudstone Formation, a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 228 to 250 million years ago in the Triassic Period (BGS Online).

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site has been described in detail in an archaeology and cultural heritage assessment (Waterman 2012). A summary is provided to place the works reported here in context.

#### *Prehistoric*

- 1.3.2 Two pits and a gully of suspected Bronze Age date were recorded 400m to the west of the site during a trial trench evaluation at the former Defence Evaluation and Research Agency. A single flint artefact is recorded 500m to the south of the site at Lower Howsell. The date of artefact is uncertain but is thought to be prehistoric.

#### *Roman*

- 1.3.3 The site lies within a county-designated 'Landscape Feature' in which Roman pottery production sites are known. The region produced Malvernian and Severn Valley wares and supplied a significant proportion of the pottery used in the West Midlands during the Roman period.

- 1.3.4 Pottery production sites have been identified and excavated 600m to the south-east and west of the site near Lower Howsell and Halfkey Lane respectively, and 500m to the south of the site at Upper Howsell. Large quantities of Roman pottery, ceramic building material and waste products, including kiln material, have been recovered from around Lower Howsell, 750m to the south-east of the site, and Grit Farm, 500m to the north-west.
- 1.3.5 The heritage assessment identified a number of watching briefs, geophysical survey and trial trench evaluations that have been undertaken in the vicinity of the site and which have all returned negative results. These results have been interpreted as indicating that either the remains of the Roman pottery production in the area are sparsely distributed or that significant truncation has occurred as a result of modern agricultural practices.

### ***Medieval***

- 1.3.6 No early medieval period remains are recorded within or in the vicinity of the site. A holloway to the north-east of Grit Farm and an area of ridge and furrow to the south of Great Buckman's Farm are recorded on the Worcestershire HER and are suspected to be of later medieval date.
- 1.3.7 Medieval ploughing has also been identified by aerial photographs and geophysical survey 750m to the west of the site at Halfkey Road.

### ***Post-medieval***

- 1.3.8 In 1972 earthworks indicative of house platforms and ditches were identified 200m to the south-east of the site at Tanhouse Farm. The site has subsequently been developed for housing.
- 1.3.9 A number of former orchard sites and a 17th-century farmhouse are recorded in the wider vicinity.

### ***Undated***

- 1.3.10 A series of undated cropmarks interpreted as ditch and pond features have been identified from aerial photographs immediately to the south of the site.

## **1.4 Previous archaeological investigations**

### ***Geophysical survey***

- 1.4.1 A geophysical survey was undertaken across the west half of the site in 2004 (WYAS 2004). An area of approximately 1ha was subject to the survey with the remainder of the site being inaccessible owing to the density of the vegetation. No anomalies indicative of archaeological features or deposits were identified by the survey.

### ***Trial trench evaluation***

- 1.4.2 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken within the site by Oxford Archaeology in October 2018 (OA 2018b). The works comprised the excavation of 16 trenches

distributed across the site to assess the potential impacts of the proposed development.

- 1.4.3 Three ditches and two pits were recorded within the trenches. Prehistoric pottery was recovered from two east-west aligned ditches, which may be the remains of a field system. The third ditch was undated, but the NE-SW alignment suggests that the ditch does not form part of the same field system. No artefactual remains were recovered from either pit and their function is uncertain.
- 1.4.4 Substantial deposits of fired clay and coal were observed in the south-east corner of the site. The origin, date and function of these deposits is unclear, but they appear to be contained in at least two large cut features and extended to a depth of greater than 2m. It was concluded that the deposits are associated with either the construction of the railway line immediately to the east of the site, or the former sewage works recorded within the site on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886, and therefore are not of archaeological significance.

## 2 EXCAVATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The primary objective of the investigation was to mitigate the impacts of the proposed development on any surviving buried archaeological remains. This was undertaken through archaeological investigations and recording, analysis of the excavated data, publication of the results and deposition of an ordered project archive with a local museum.
- 2.1.2 The specific aims and objectives of the excavation were:
- i. To determine and understand the nature, function and character of the archaeological remains within their cultural and environmental setting.
  - ii. To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence.
  - iii. To establish the extent and longevity of the prehistoric remains identified by the recent evaluation.
  - iv. To contextualize the findings within the local and regional landscapes.
  - v. To make available the results of the excavation.

### 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The works comprised the excavation of two areas. Area 1 measured 24.50m by 15.15m and had been positioned to investigate a ditch of suspected prehistoric origin identified in the recently completed evaluation. Area 2 measured 25.75m by 15.05m and was also targeted on the remains of a ditch of suspected prehistoric origin.
- 2.2.2 Area 2 was moved 9m to the west and re-orientated from east-west to an ENE-WSW alignment due to the proximity of the site perimeter fence.
- 2.2.3 The site-specific methodologies were as follows:
- i. The areas of excavation were set out by a trained OA surveyor using a GPS system with a sub-25mm accuracy.
  - ii. Removal of the overburden was undertaken by a suitably powered excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Removal of the overburden was undertaken in level spits of no more than 100mm down to the first archaeological horizon, or natural geology, whichever was encountered first.
  - iii. Once removal of the overburden deposits was completed a digital pre-excavation plan showing all revealed features was produced using a GPS with sub 25mm accuracy.
  - iv. A sufficient sample of the revealed features was investigated by hand to establish their character and date, where possible. Focus was on establishing the date and nature of the features and how they might have functioned. The level of hand investigation was discussed with Aidan Smyth, Archaeology and Planning Advisor to Wychavon and Malvern Hills District Councils,

## **3 RESULTS**

### **3.1 Introduction and presentation of results**

3.1.1 The results of the excavation are presented below, and include a stratigraphic description of the areas. The full details of both areas with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in Appendix A.

### **3.2 General soils and ground conditions**

3.2.1 The soil sequence between both areas was fairly uniform. The natural geology of pink clay with areas of mid-dark blackish grey silty clay and gravel was overlain by a silty clay subsoil, which in turn was overlain by topsoil.

3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the excavation were generally wet and freezing. Archaeological features, where present, were sometimes difficult to identify against the underlying natural geology due to its varied nature.

### **3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits**

3.3.1 Archaeological features were present in both Area 1 and Area 2.

### **3.4 Area 1 (Fig. 2; Plate 4)**

3.4.1 Area 1 was targeted on a ditch (602) identified during the recent evaluation (OA 2018b). A single 7g sherd of Beaker pottery was recovered from the feature during the evaluation. However, given the size of sherd and its abraded condition it was suspected to be residual and not indicative of the date of the feature. When viewed in a wider context the feature was found to be a pit rather than a ditch and no further excavation was undertaken of the feature.

3.4.2 Adjacent to the western side of the pit was a smaller pit (2002), which had a shallow concave profile (Fig. 4, section 2001; Plate 2). The pit measured 0.69m wide and 0.13m deep and contained a single natural silting event.

3.4.3 A small posthole (2000) was present towards the north-west part of Area 1. The posthole had a shallow concave profile, measured 0.45m wide and 0.13m deep, and contained a single natural silting event (Fig. 4, section 2000; Plate 3). Neither this feature nor pit 2002 contained any artefactual evidence.

### **3.5 Area 2 (Fig. 3; Plate 4)**

3.5.1 Area 2 was positioned to allow further investigation of a ditch (1203). Identified during the recent evaluation, the ditch contained a single piece of mid-late Iron Age pottery. The ditch continued in a linear fashion from the eastern limit of excavation to the west with a slight curve to the north at its western end, where the ditch terminated near the northwest corner of the area. Two further interventions were dug by hand to further characterise the feature.

3.5.2 A single intervention, 3005, was excavated and showed the ditch to have a concave profile with slightly asymmetrical sides (Fig. 4, section 3001). The feature was 0.94m wide and 0.24m deep, and it contained a single natural silting event (Fig. 4).

3.5.3 The terminus of the ditch, 3003, was excavated longitudinally and produced a very shallow profile, just 0.12m deep, with a gently sloping base suggestive of truncation rather than a definite terminus (Fig. 4, section 3000; Plate 5). This intervention also contained a single natural silting event and neither 3003 nor 3005 contained any artefactual evidence.

### **3.6 Finds and environmental summary**

3.6.1 No finds were recovered during the excavation.

3.6.2 An environmental sample was taken from the posthole within Area 1. The sample, processed for charred plant remains and artefacts, produced a flot consisting of mostly modern roots and poorly persevered charcoal fragments. No other charred material was present.

## **4 DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Reliability of field investigation**

- 4.1.1 During the evaluation several features were only visible within the trenches once they had been exposed for a couple days and had been given the chance to weather out. Therefore, during the excavation both areas were left open for several days. Wet ground conditions meant that features were readily identifiable.
- 4.1.2 Due to the variable character of the natural, several test interventions were had dug into possible features to confirm they were geological variations.

### **4.2 Excavation objectives and results**

- 4.2.1 The results of these works confirmed the presence of a ditch within the north-east corner of the site. The eastern extent of the ditch is unknown, as the feature continued beyond the site boundary. The western terminus of ditch was recorded within the trench. However, given the shallow nature of the feature it possible the ditch has been truncated away rather the terminating. This feature is tentatively dated to the Iron Age based on a single sherd of pottery recovered from the intervention. This date is made considerably more tentative by the absence of additional artefactual evidence.
- 4.2.2 A second ditch recorded during the evaluation was re-interpreted as pit during these works. It was speculated in results of the evaluation that the parallel nature of the two ditches may be indicative of a field system. With only one ditch present now, no suggestion of a field system is present within the site.
- 4.2.3 The archaeology and cultural heritage assessment noted very little prehistoric activity noted in the vicinity of the proposed development area and the findings of this excavation are consistent with that view.
- 4.2.4 These works have confirmed the conclusions of the trial trench evaluation. Activity of a prehistoric date occurred within the wider landscape of proposed development area, but not to any significant extent within the area itself. The possible boundary ditch in Area 2 has a slight curve, which may suggest that any activity relating to it is located further north and east. The pits and posthole in Area 1 are at some distance from the ditch and therefore it is not possible to establish any relationship between the features.

## APPENDIX A AREA DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Area 1						
General description					Orientation	E-W
Area 1 was located on a ditch (602) identified during the evaluation. The ditch was demonstrated to in fact be a pit. A second pit and a single posthole were recorded within the area. All feature cut the natural geology of clay which was overlain by subsoil and topsoil.					Length (m)	24.50
					Width (m)	15.15
					Avg. depth (m)	0.54
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
2000	Cut	0.45	0.13	Posthole	-	-
2001	Fill	0.45	0.13	Fill of Posthole [2000]: soft, mid greyish brown, silty clay.	-	-
2002	Cut	0.69	0.13	Pit	-	-
2003	Fill	0.69	0.13	Fill of pit [2002]: soft, mid grey brown, silty clay.	-	-
2004	Layer	-	0.22	Topsoil: friable, dark blackish brown, clayey silt.	-	-
2005	Layer	-	0.32	Subsoil: soft, mid pinkish brown, silty clay.	-	-
2006	Layer	-	-	Natural: firm pink clay with areas of mid-dark blackish grey silty clay and gravel.	-	-

Area 2						
General description					Orientation	E-W
Area 2 was targeted on a ditch, 1203. The ditch was observed to extend beyond the eastern limits of area 2, but the western terminus was recorded within the area. The ditch cut the natural geology of pink clay which overlain by subsoil and topsoil.					Length (m)	25.75
					Width (m)	15.05
					Avg. depth (m)	0.60
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
3000	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil: friable, dark blackish brown, clayey silt.	-	-
3001	Layer	-	0.35	Subsoil: soft, mid pinkish brown, silty clay.	-	-
3002	Layer	-	-	Natural: firm pink clay with areas of mid-dark blackish grey silty clay and gravel.	-	-
3003	Cut	1.03	0.12	Cut of ditch terminus	-	-
3004	Fill	1.03	0.12	Fill of ditch terminus [3003]: moderately firm, mid greyish brown, sandy clay.	-	-
3005	Cut	0.94	0.24	Cut of ditch	-	-



3006	Fill	0.94	0.24	Fill of ditch [3005]: moderately firm, dark greyish brown, sandy clay.	-	-
------	------	------	------	--	---	---

## APPENDIX B ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

### B.1 Environmental Samples

*By Sharon Cook*

#### *Introduction*

- B.1.1 A single sample was taken during the second phase of excavation. The sample originated within posthole 2000 and is undated.
- B.1.2 The sample was processed at Oxford Archaeology using a modified Siraf-type water flotation machine. The flot material was collected in a 250µm mesh and heavy residues in a 500µm mesh and both were dried in a heated room. The residues were sorted by eye while the flot material was scanned using a low power (x10) binocular microscope to identify cereal grains and chaff, smaller seeds and other quantifiable remains.
- B.1.3 The sample produced a small flot of 15ml of which c 25% comprised fine modern roots. The charred material is composed entirely of charcoal which is generally small in size. Although some fragments were larger than 2mm the condition is generally poor with heavy external encrustation as a result of mineral precipitation. No other charred material is present within this flot.

## APPENDIX C      BIBLIOGRAPHY

BGS Online, *British Geological Survey online viewer*, accessed August 2018,  
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

CifA, 2014 *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

OA, 2018a Land Off Eastward Road, Great Malvern, Worcestershire, Archaeological Excavation WSI, Oxford Archaeology, unpublished client report

OA, 2018b Land off Eastward Road, Malvern, Worcestershire, Archaeological Evaluation Report, Oxford Archaeology, unpublished client report

Waterman, 2012 Eastward Road, Malvern, Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Assessment, Waterman Energy, Environment and Design Ltd, unpublished client report.

WYAS, 2004 Land at Upper Howsell, Great Malvern, Worcestershire, Geophysical Survey, West Yorkshire Archaeological Services, unpublished client report

**APPENDIX D****SITE SUMMARY DETAILS**

<b>Site name:</b>	Land Off Eastward Road, Great Malvern, Worcestershire
<b>Site code:</b>	WSM70796
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SO 78134 48551
<b>Type:</b>	Excavation
<b>Date and duration:</b>	December 2018, 1 week
<b>Area of Site</b>	2.95 ha
<b>Location of archive:</b>	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Worcestershire Museums in due course, under the following accession number: WSM70796.
<b>Summary of Results:</b>	<p>Oxford Archaeology undertook a small excavation on the site of a proposed residential development at Eastward Road, Great Malvern, Worcestershire. The works comprised the excavation of two areas targeted on possible ditches recorded during the recent evaluation of the site.</p> <p>In Area 1 the targeted feature was found to be a pit rather than a ditch. A second pit and a posthole were also recorded in this area. In Area 2 the ditch was confirmed but no further features were identified. None of the features excavated during this phase of works produced any artefacts.</p>



**Head Office/Registered Office/  
OA South**

Janus House  
Osney Mead  
Oxford OX20ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800  
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496  
e: [info@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto:info@oxfordarchaeology.com)  
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>

**OA North**

Mill 3  
Moor Lane  
Lancaster LA1 1QD

t: +44 (0) 1524 541 000  
f: +44 (0) 1524 848 606  
e: [oanorth@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto: oanorth@oxfordarchaeology.com)  
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>

**OA East**

15 Trafalgar Way  
Bar Hill  
Cambridgeshire  
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850500  
e: [oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto: oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com)  
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>



**Director:** Gill Hey, BA PhD FSA MCIfA  
*Oxford Archaeology Ltd is a  
Private Limited Company, N<sup>o</sup>: 1618597  
and a Registered Charity, N<sup>o</sup>: 285627*