

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**13-15 Mill Street, Eynsham,  
Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Susan Porter**

**Site Code: MSE13/133**

**(SP 4320 0937)**

**13-15 Mill Street, Eynsham,  
Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Mr. M Gill and Mrs Y Gill**

by Susan Porter

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MSE 13/133

**July 2013**

## Summary

**Site name:** 13-15 Mill Street, Eynsham, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SP 4320 0937

**Site activity:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 8th July 2013

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Susan Porter

**Site code:** MSE 13/133

**Area of site:** 1300 sq m

**Summary of results:** The evaluation revealed little of possible archaeological interest, which comprised an undated pit, and an old stream channel or pond which had become infilled in late post-medieval times. It is considered that the site has low archaeological potential

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museum Service in due course.

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 09.07.13 Steve Preston ✓ 09.07.13
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# 13-15 Mill Street, Eynsham, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Susan Porter

**Report 13/133**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 13-15 Mill Street, Eynsham, Oxfordshire (SP4320 0937) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr David Muir of Marriotts, Commercial Property Consultants, 29 Beaumont Street, Oxford on behalf of Mr. M Gill and Mrs Y Gill c/o Forward House, Oakfield Industrial Estate, Eynsham, Oxfordshire, OX29 4TT.

Planning permission (12/0746/P/FP) has been sought from West Oxfordshire District Council for residential development at 13-15 Mill Street, Eynsham. The proposed development comprises the construction of six new houses and associated parking, and conversion of an existing building. The results of a field evaluation were requested to determine if the site has archaeological potential and if so, produce information to mitigate the archaeological impact of the proposed development.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Hugh Coddington, Principal Archaeologist, for Oxford County Council Archaeological Service, advising the District. The fieldwork was undertaken by Susan Porter and Kyle Beaverstock on 8th July 2013 and the site code is MSE 13/133. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museum Service in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located on the western side of Mill Street alongside the passage Conduit Lane in Eynsham (Fig 1). Eynsham lies to the north west of Oxford, close to the confluence of the River Evenlode and the River Thames. The area around the site is currently mostly residential with shops along the High Street to the south (Fig 2). The site lies at a height of approximately 68m above Ordnance Datum, and the underlying geology is mapped as 2nd (Summertown-Radley) Terrace Deposits (BGS 1982) which was observed in both trenches.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the historic medieval core of Eynsham, and more generally within the archaeologically rich Upper Thames Valley with much Roman and prehistoric activity in the general area (Booth *et al* 2007; Morigi 2011). Eynsham has Saxon origins and is documented as a 'town' in AD571 after the battle of Bedcanford (Munby *et al.* 1975). It is also mentioned in Domesday Book of 1086 (Williams and Martin 2002) and became prosperous in medieval times (Munby *et al.* 1975). Map evidence suggests that the site lies within an area of burgage plots. An archaeological watching brief to the east at 3 Thames Street recorded several pits of mostly post-medieval date, although one pit contained 11th-century pottery (Cass 2008). A three trench evaluation to the east on the outskirts of Eynsham revealed a medieval ditch and a series of undated gullies, pits and postholes alongside residual sherds of Roman pottery (Milbank 2008).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development. The work was to be carried out in a manner that would not compromise the integrity of the archaeological features or deposits which warrant preservation in-situ, or might be better excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of the project were:

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period were present.

To determine if any prehistoric occupation or landscape features were present on the site.

To determine if there were later prehistoric, Roman, Saxon or medieval deposits present on site.

It was proposed to dig two trenches, 10m and 20m long and 1.60m wide, the trenches were to be located targeting the footprints of the proposed new houses. A contingency of additional 10m of trenching was included within the specification should it be necessary to clarify the results of the initial findings.

The topsoil and other overburden was removed by a JCB-type machine equipped with a toothless ditching bucket to expose archaeologically sensitive levels, and where archaeological features were present they were hand cleaned and excavated in half section. A metal detector was used to enhance finds recovery.

## **Results**

Both trenches were dug as intended (Fig. 3). A complete list of trenches giving dimensions and details of stratigraphy is given as Appendix 1 and a catalogue of excavated features forms Appendix 2.

### Trench 1 (Fig. 3, Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned north east-south west and was 10.20m long and 0.78m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.07m hardcore and 0.25m of chalky rubble made ground overlying 0.35m of dark brown sandy clay subsoil which in turn overlay mid yellow red sandy gravel natural geology. A tree hole was observed at 3.30-4m along the eastern edge of the trench, this was investigated but not recorded in detail. No deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

### Trench 2 (Figs 3 and 4, Pls 2, 3 and 4)

Trench 2 was aligned roughly east-west and was 20.20m long and 1.00m deep at the eastern extent and 1.80m at the western end where a silted channel was observed. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of hardcore and 0.20m of chalky rubble made ground, overlying dark brown sandy clay subsoil which in turn overlay mid yellow red sandy gravel natural geology.

A silted channel (Pl 3) or possibly a pond (1) was observed at the western end of the trench extending 7.60m to the east and was machine excavated to a depth of 1.48m deep, although the base was not reached. The feature appeared linear (north-south) in plan with a steeply sloping side to the east, cutting through the natural subsoil and into the gravel. It was filled with three deposits, the uppermost of which (50) comprised firm dark brown grey sandy clay with moderate 5-10mm gravel inclusions; this overlay friable mid greyish brown sand clay (51) with moderate large rounded chalky inclusions and containing a single brown glass bottle fragment (7mm thick) likely to be of late 18th/19th century date, which in turn overlay sticky dark grey brown silty clay (52) containing two fragments of wood. Both pieces had bark present, the longer piece 600mm in length was frayed at one end and is likely to be a broken tree branch. The smaller piece 300mm long had a single diagonal cut and is likely to represent an action of garden maintenance. These finds were retained on site.

At 12m an undated pit (2) was recorded (Pl. 4), it was 0.65m in diameter and 0.23m deep with a single fill (53) comprising loose mid brown grey sandy clay with infrequent gravel inclusions, no finds were recovered.

## **Conclusion**

The evaluation revealed only two features of limited archaeological interest. The pit (2) seems isolated and is undated. The origin of the silted channel (1) or pond is undetermined but from its inclusion of a fragment of late post-medieval glass this suggests it might be of relatively modern date. No evidence of the burgage plots

suggested by map evidence was observed. The results of the evaluation suggest that this site has very little archaeological potential.

## References

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- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
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## APPENDIX 1: Trench details

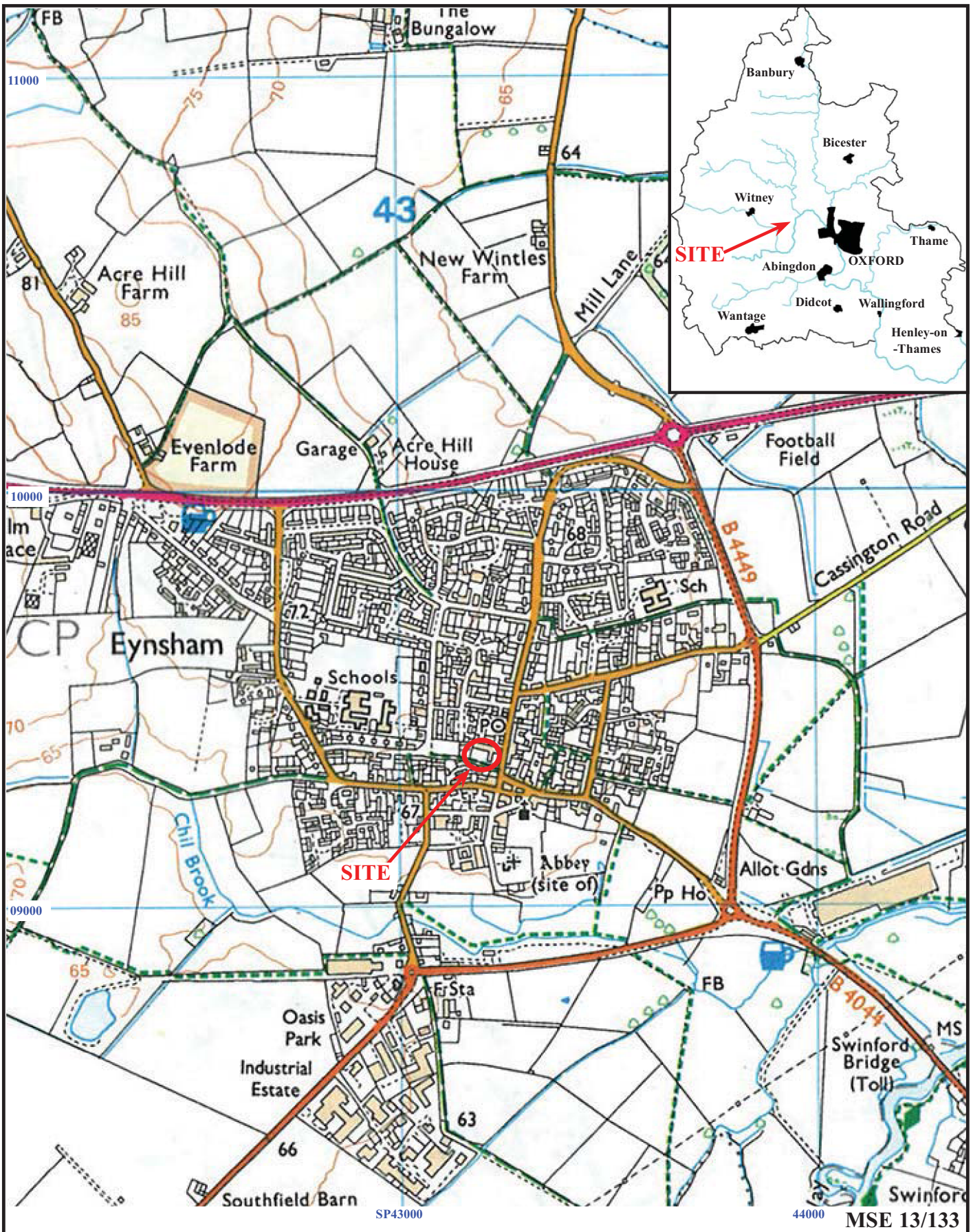
0m at south or west end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	10.20	1.60	0.78	0–0.07m hardcore; 0.07-0.32m chalky rubble made ground; 0.32-0.67m dark brown sandy clay subsoil; 0.67+m mid yellow red sandy gravel natural geology.. <b>[PI. 1]</b>
2	20.20	1.60	1.00	0–0.10m hardcore; 0.10-0.30m chalky rubble made ground; 0.30-0.95m dark brown sandy clay subsoil; 0.95+m mid yellow red sandy gravel natural geology. Silted channel (1) observed at 0-7.60m to depth of 1.80m including made ground and hardcore layers. Pit (2) observed at 12m <b>[PIs 2–4]</b>



**APPENDIX 2: Feature details**

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
2	1	50, 51, 52	Silted Channel	Likely Post-Medieval	Glass
2	2	53	Pit	Undated	None



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Figure 1. Location of site within Eynsham and Oxfordshire

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Figure 2. Location of site off Mill Street.

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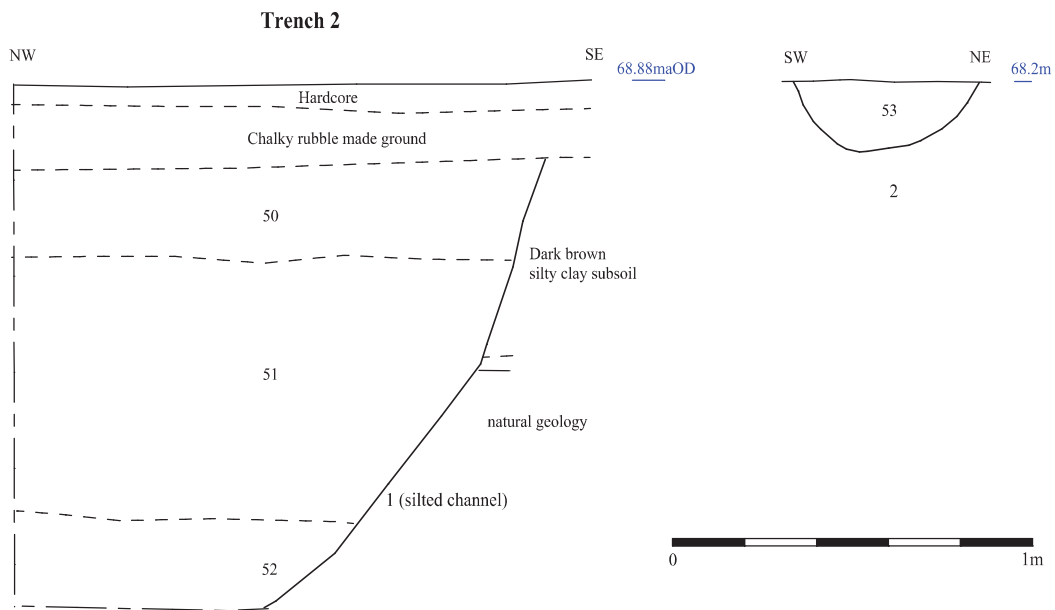
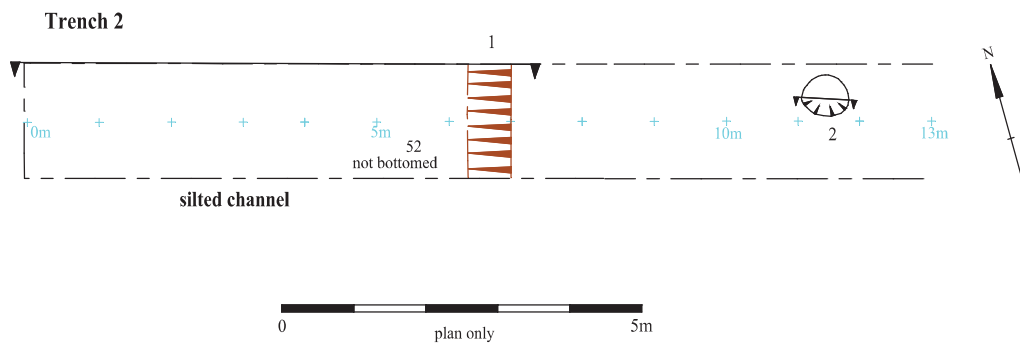


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Figure 3. Location of trenches.





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Figure 4. Detail of Trench 2.

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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north east, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking east, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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Plates 1 - 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 2, silted channel (cut 1), looking north, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 4. Trench 2, pit 2, looking north, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.

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Plates 3 - 4.

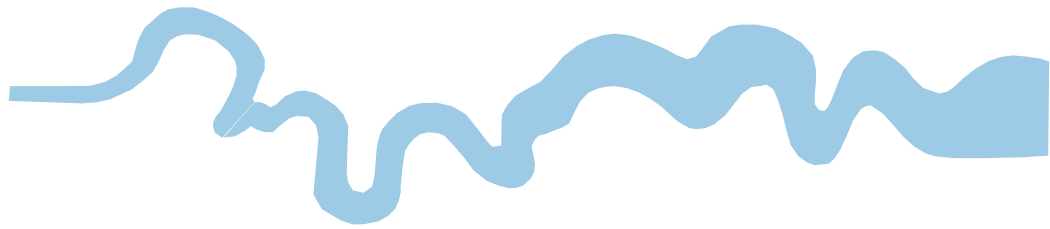
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## TIME CHART

	<b>Calendar Years</b>
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late .....	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early .....	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late .....	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early .....	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper .....	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle .....	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower .....	2,000,000 BC







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