

Land to the West of Wootton Road,
Abingdon-on-Thames,
Oxfordshire
Archaeological Evaluation



for:
Planning Potential

on behalf of:
Aldi

CA Project: CR0524
CA Report: CR0524_1

November 2020



**Land to the West of Wootton Road,
Abingdon-on-Thames,
Oxfordshire**
Archaeological Evaluation

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Document Control Grid						
Revision	Date	Author	Checked by	Status	Reasons for revision	Approved by
A	27/11/20	Ray Kennedy	Richard Greatorex	Internal review	General Edit	Richard Greatorex

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e. enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk				

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SUMMARY

Project name:	Land to the West of Wootton, Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxfordshire
Location:	Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxfordshire
NGR:	449028, 198771
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	16-17 November 2020
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)
Site Code:	WOOT20

In November 2020, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation of land at Land to the West of Wootton, Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxfordshire. A total of five trenches were excavated.

Despite the archaeological potential of the site, only two ditches were recorded during the evaluation.

A ditch in Trench 1, which is likely to be agricultural in nature, contained pottery broadly dated to the Late Bronze Age/Iron Age and may be related to the Iron Age/Roman settlement identified to the east of the site, while the ditch in Trench 4 contained no dating evidence. Both ditches broadly conformed to the linear anomalies identified during the previous geophysical survey of the site.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In November 2020, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation of Land to the West of Wootton, Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxfordshire centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 449028, 198771 (see Figure 1). This evaluation was undertaken for for Planning Potential on behalf of Aldi.
- 1.2. The evaluation results will inform a planning application for the erection of a Class E discount food store with associated access, parking and servicing areas, and landscaping, which will be made to Vale of White Horse District Council.
- 1.3. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CA (2019) and approved by Richard Oram, County Archaeologist for Oxford County Council.
- 1.4. The evaluation was also in line with *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (Historic England 2015) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Historic England 2015).

The site

- 1.5. The site is a triangular plot of agricultural land located to the north of Abingdon, Oxfordshire. The A34 forms the north-western boundary of the site, with Wootton Road to the east and agricultural land to the south.
- 1.6. The underlying bedrock geology of the site is mapped as Ampthill Clay Formation and Kimmeridge Clay Formation (undifferentiated) – mudstone, with no superficial deposits recorded

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The information below draws upon the archaeological background presented in the preceding geophysical survey report (Sumo 2018), and a Heritage Assessment (EDP, 2017), subsequent geophysical survey (MOLA 2015) and evaluation of the adjacent site (CA, 2017).
- 2.2. The Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record 2.2. (HER) notes the discovery of a medieval pottery scatter and a single Roman pottery sherd during the monitoring of

a pipeline excavation to the east of the site (HER No.15680). The only other archaeological finds recorded within the immediate area of the site are a prehistoric cremation, found further north on the same pipeline route (HER No.15681), and the chance find of a 15th Century Bell Mount and metal cleat (16026).

2.3. There are also several sites of archaeological interest in the wider Abingdon-on-Thames area, particularly around the town centre and the lower terraces of the River Thames. These include the Barrow Hills Monument complex, c. 2km to the south-west of the site, and areas of Iron Age and Roman activity around the Ashville Trading Estate.

2.4. The site is located approximately 1.5km to the north of the historic town centre, and would have lain within medieval and early post-medieval open field systems. The nearest known areas of historic settlement are the hamlet of Northcourt and the village of Shippon, each lying approximately 1km from the site.

Recent Works

2.5. An archaeological evaluation (comprising fourteen trenches) was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in January 2017 on land at Dunmore Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire to the immediate east of the current site. The earliest features encountered comprised a concentration of ditches, pits and postholes within the south-western part of the site. These features, representing an area of Middle Iron Age to Early Roman settlement, correlate with the results of a preceding geophysical survey (MOLA 2015). A Mesolithic flint blade and a Bronze Age flint scraper were recovered as residual finds within later contexts. Otherwise the northern, eastern and central areas of the site did not contain any features which pre-date the medieval period. Evidence of medieval and/or post-medieval agricultural practice, comprising ploughed-out ridge and furrow cultivation remains, was identified throughout the site.

2.6. A geophysical survey (Sumo, 2018) of the site itself has not revealed any definite archaeological anomalies. A linear, ditch-like feature has been detected which may be related to the Iron Age / Romano-British settlement recorded immediately to the east; however, its exact origin remains unclear. Further weak linear trends are also of uncertain origin, though are more likely to be a result of modern or agricultural activity. The remaining responses are modern and include evidence of ploughing and disturbance from nearby ferrous metal objects.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The general objective of the evaluation was to provide further information on the likely archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date and state of preservation. This information will enable OCC to identify and assess the particular significance of any archaeological heritage assets within the site, consider the impact of the proposed development upon that significance and, if appropriate, develop strategies to avoid or minimise conflict between heritage asset conservation and the development proposals, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2019).
- 3.2. The specific objective of the evaluation was to determine if any remains associated with the adjacent Roman settlement enter into the proposed development site boundary, and to test the results of the previous geophysical survey.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1. The evaluation fieldwork comprised the excavation of 5 trenches (Figure 2):
- 5no 30m x 1.8m trenches;
- 4.2. The trenches were located to test geophysical anomalies and to provide a representative sample of the remainder of the site.
- 4.3. Trenches were set out on OS National Grid co-ordinates using Leica GPS. Overburden was stripped from the trenches by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. All machining was conducted under archaeological supervision to the top of the natural substrate, which was the level at which archaeological features were first encountered.
- 4.4. Archaeological features/deposits were investigated, planned and recorded in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.5. No deposits were identified that required sampling.
- 4.6. Artefacts were processed in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 3: Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*.
- 4.7. CA will make arrangements with Oxfordshire Museum Service for the deposition of the project archive and, subject to agreement with the legal landowner(s), the

artefact collection. A digital archive will also be prepared and deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The archives (museum and digital) will be prepared and deposited in accordance with *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020).

- 4.8. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix C, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1. This section provides an overview of the evaluation results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are given in Appendix A. Details of the artefactual material recovered from the site are given in Section 6 and Appendix B. Details of the environmental samples (palaeo-environmental evidence) are given in Section 7 and Appendix C. Details of the relative heights of the principal deposits and features expressed as metres Above Ordnance Datum (m AOD) are given in Appendix D.
- 5.2. The general stratigraphy was broadly the same throughout the two trenches. The natural substrate encountered at a depth included between 0.37m (in Trench 3) and 0.85m (in **Trench 1**) below the present ground level; it consisted in a friable mid-reddish brown silty clay silt/clay, with frequent gravel inclusions in **Trench 1, 2, 3** and 5. In **Trench 4** it was a greyish yellow silty clay. In **Trenches 1** and **2** it was overlaid by a dark greyish brown sandy clay colluvium, which in turn was overlaid by a light yellowish-brown clayey sand subsoil with gravel inclusions. No subsoil was noted in **Trenches 3, 4, and 5**. **Trench 1, 2, 3** and **5** were overlaid by a mid-grey brown clayey sand topsoil, which **Trench 4** was overlain by a mid-yellow/brown silt/clay topsoil
- 5.3. No archaeology was identified within **Trenches 2, 3** and **5**.

Trench 1 (Figure 3)

- 5.4. Ditch **104** was revealed in the centre of **Trench 1**. It was aligned northeast-southwest and was 2m in length, 0.9m in width and 0.61m in depth. It was linear in plan with steep concave sides. Ditch 104 contained one fill, **105**, a mid-yellow/brown compact silt/clay. Pottery of Late Bronze Age/Iron Age date was recovered from the fill of the ditch.

Trench 4 (Figure 4)

- 5.5. Ditch **402** was revealed in the centre of **Trench 4**. It was aligned northeast-southwest and was 2.46m in length, 0.77m in width and 0.28m in depth. It with linear in plan with gently sloping concave sides. Ditch **104** contained two fills, **403**, a mid-yellow brown friable silty clay, and **404**, a dark yellow friable sandy silt.

6. THE FINDS

- 6.1. Artefactual material, of probable Late prehistoric date, was hand-recovered from one ditch fill. Quantities of the artefact types recorded are given in Appendix B. The pottery has been recorded according to sherd count/weight per fabric and the fabric code (in parenthesis in the text) has been devised for the purpose of this report.

Pottery

- 6.2. Two unfeathered sherds (16g) of handmade pottery in a quartz-and-shell tempered fabric (QZSH) were recorded from fill **105** of ditch **104**. These comprise a bodysherd and a base sherd. In the absence of decoration and indicators of form, late prehistoric dating (Late Bronze Age to Iron Age) is considered most likely on the basis of fabric and firing characteristics.

Other finds

- 6.3. Ditch fill **105** also produced three fragments of fuel ash (13g). This type of residue is a product of high temperature processes or events and is not necessarily diagnostic of metalworking activity.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1. Despite the archaeological potential of the site, only two ditches were recorded during the evaluation.
- 7.2. A ditch in **Trench 1**, which is likely to be agricultural in nature, contained pottery broadly dated to the Late Bronze Age/Iron Age and may be related to the Iron Age/Roman settlement identified to the east of the site, while the ditch in **Trench 4** contained no dating evidence. Both ditches broadly conformed to the linear anomalies identified during the previous geophysical survey of the site.

7.3. No specific evidence linking the site to the adjacent Roman settlement was identified, and the site, if it was linked, was likely part of the settlement's agricultural hinterland.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

8.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Francesco Catanzaro, assisted by Majbritt Bengtson. This report was written by Ray Kennedy. The finds reports were written by Jacky Sommerville. The report illustrations were prepared by Rosanna Price. The project archive has been compiled by Richard Paxford, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Ray Kennedy.

9. REFERENCES

- British Geological Survey 2020 *Geology of Britain Viewer*
<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geology-of-britain-viewer/> Accessed 24 November 2020
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology), 2017, Dunmore Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Archaeological Evaluation. CA typescript report 17055
- CA, 2020, Land to the West of Wootton Road Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation
- EDP, 2017, Land North West of Abingdon, Heritage Statement, Ref EDP2380_03a
- Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government 2019 National Planning Policy Framework
- MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology), 2015, Archaeological geophysical survey of land adjacent to Wootton Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, MOLA Report No. 15/193
- Sumo, 2018, Land off Wootton Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Geophysical Survey Report, Ref:12841

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

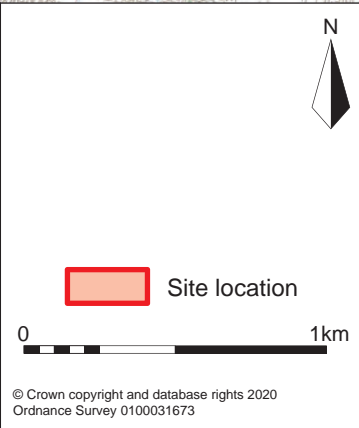
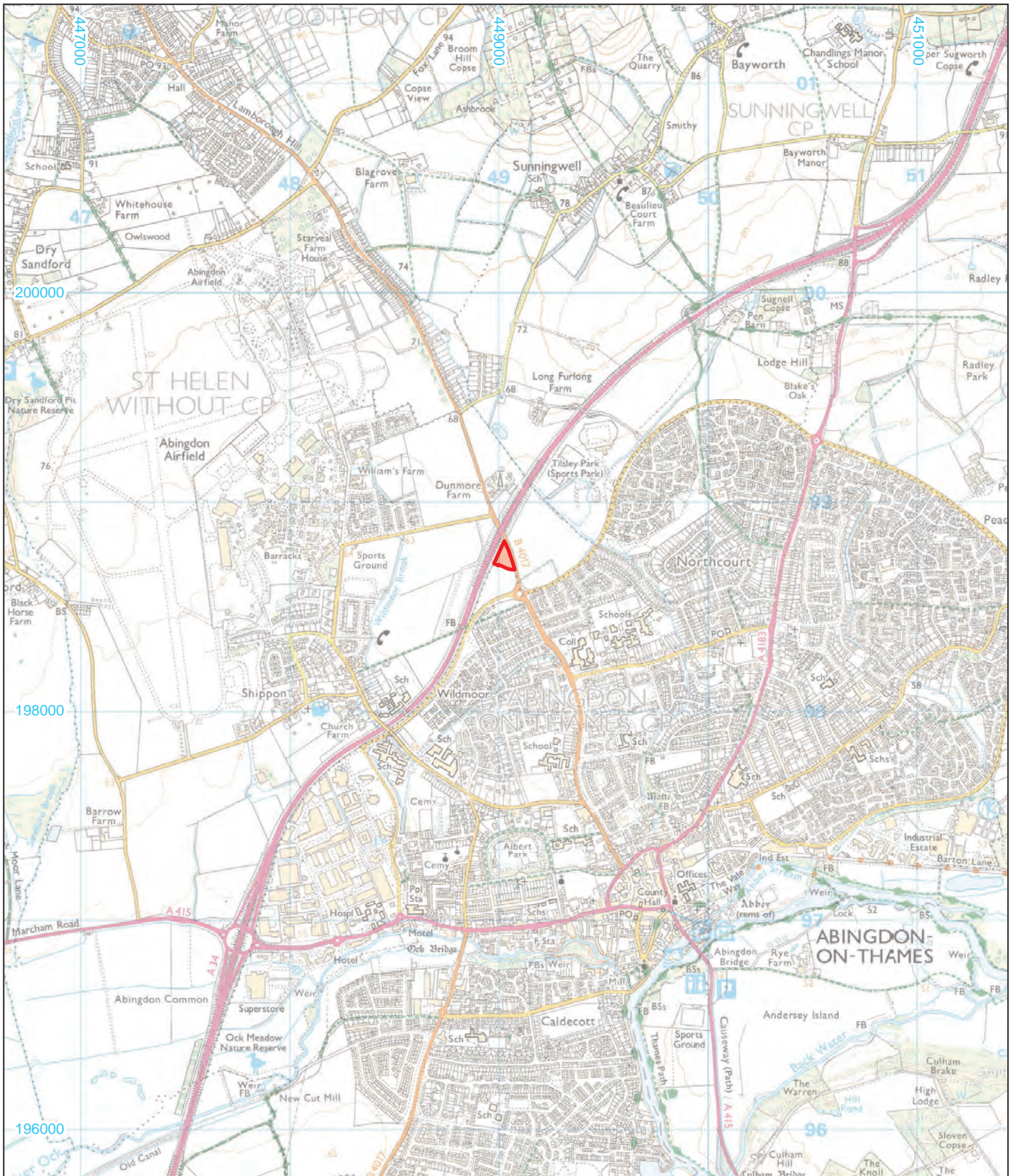
Trench	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Made grey brown clayey sandy, occasional pebble inclusions	30	1.85	0-0.2
1	101	Layer		Subsoil	Light yellowish-brown clayey sand with frequent gravel	30	1.85	0.2-0.5
1	102	Layer		Colluvium	Dark grey brown sandy clay with moderate flecks of charcoal	16	1.85	0.5-0.85
1	103	Layer		Natural	Mid reddish-brown sandy clay with frequent red sandy gravel and occasional sandstone inclusions, and frequent patches of yellow/grey clay	30	1.85	0.85+
1	104	Cut		Cut of ditch	Linear in plan with steep straight sides and a flat base	2	0.9	0.61
1	105	Fill	104	Fill of ditch	Mid yellow brown silty clay with occasional sub-rounded flint inclusion	2	0.9	0.61
2	200	Layer		Topsoil	Made grey brown clayey sandy, occasional pebble inclusions	30	1.85	0-0.17
2	201	Layer		Subsoil	Light yellowish-brown clayey sand with frequent gravel	30	1.85	0.17-0.47
2	202	Layer		Colluvium	Dark grey brown sandy clay with moderate flecks of charcoal	16	1.85	0.47-0.6
2	203	Layer		Natural	Mid reddish-brown sandy clay with frequent red sandy gravel and occasional sandstone inclusions, and frequent patches of yellow/grey clay	30	1.85	0.6+
3	300	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey clayey sand with occasional pebble inclusions	30	1.85	0-0.27
3	301	Layer		Natural	Mid reddish-brown sandy clay with frequent dark red gravelly clayey sand	30	1.85	0.27-0.4
4	400	Layer		Topsoil	Mid yellowish-brown silty clay	30	1.85	0-0.28
4	401	Layer		Natural	Grey yellow silty clay	30	1.85	0.28-0.45
4	402	Cut		Cut of Ditch	Linear in plan with moderate concave side and a concave base	2.46	0.77	0.28
4	403	Fill	402	Fill of Ditch	Mid yellow brown silty clay	2.46	0.77	0.2
4	404	Fill	402	Fill of Ditch	Dark yellow brown sandy silt	2.46	0.55	0.08
5	500	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey clayey sand with occasional pebble inclusions	30	1.85	0-0.25
5	501	Layer		Natural	Mid reddish-brown sandy clay with frequent dark red gravelly clayey sand	30	1.85	0.27-0.37

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Context	Category	Description	Fabric Code	Count	Weight (g)	Spot-date
105	Late prehistoric pottery	Quartz-and-shell tempered fabric	QZSH	2	16	Late prehistoric
	Industrial waste	Fuel ash		3	13	

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Land to the West of Wootton Road, Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxfordshire	
Short description	<p>In November 2020, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation of land at Land to the West of Wootton, Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxfordshire. A total of five trenches were excavated.</p> <p>Despite the archaeological potential of the site, only two ditches were recorded during the evaluation.</p> <p>A ditch in Trench 1, which is likely to be agricultural in nature, contained pottery broadly dated to the Late Bronze Age/Iron Age and may be related to the Iron Age/Roman settlement identified to the east of the site, while the ditch in Trench 4 contained no dating evidence. Both ditches broadly conformed to the linear anomalies identified during the previous geophysical survey of the site.</p>	
Project dates	16-17 November	
Project type	field evaluation	
Previous work	Geophysical Survey, SUMO 2018	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site location	Land to the West of Wootton Road, Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxfordshire	
Study area (m ² /ha)		
Site co-ordinates	449028, 198771	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project brief originator	OCC	
Project design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Ray Kennedy	
Project Supervisor	Francesco Catanzaro	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.) Oxford Museum Service	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc) Indicate the contents of each archive box
Physical		For example ceramics, animal bone etc
Paper		Context sheets, matrices etc
Digital		Database, digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Cotswold Archaeology 2020 Land to the West of Wootton Road, Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxfordshire: Archaeological evaluation CA typescript report CR0524_1		



Cotswold Archaeology

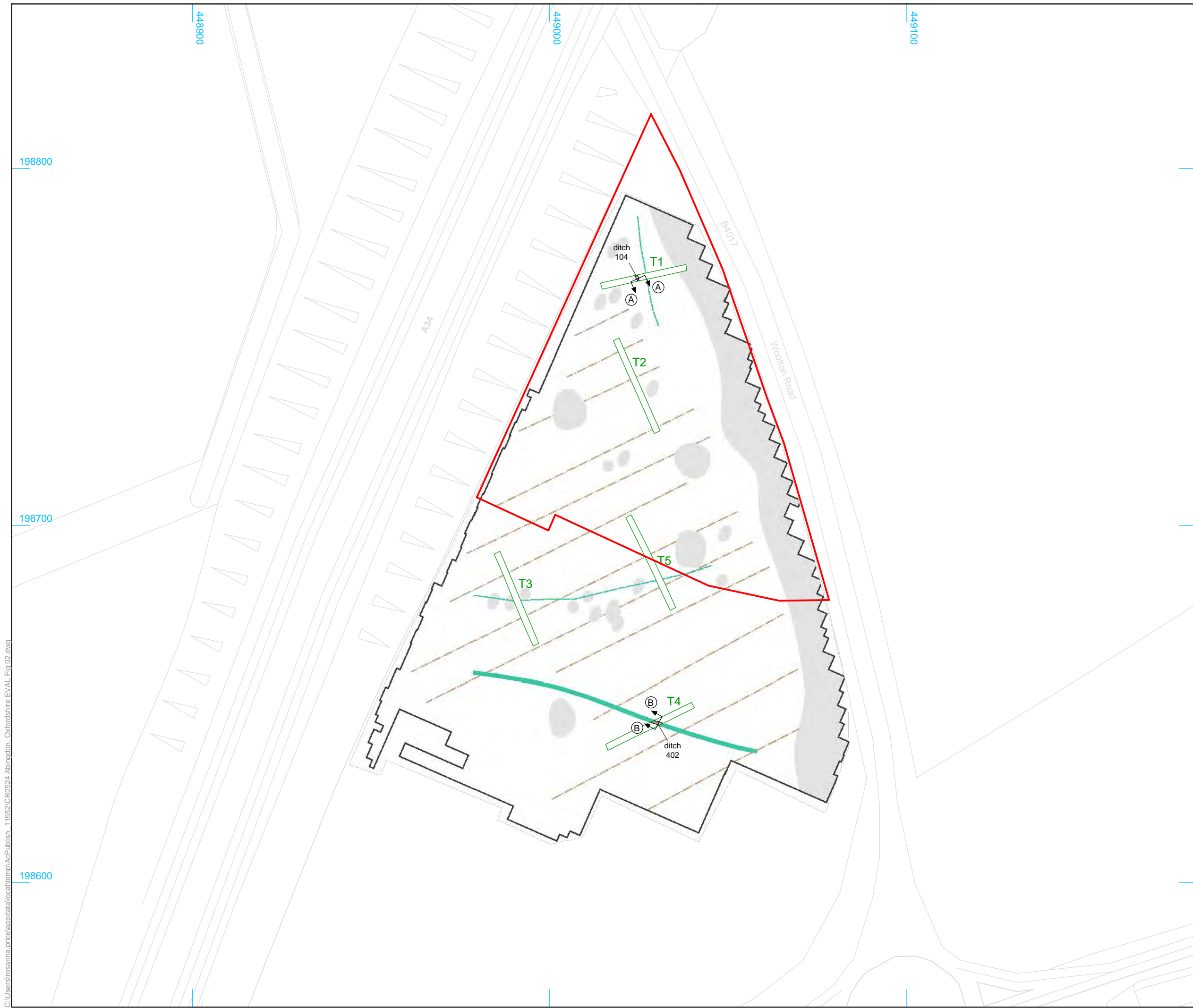
Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Exeter 01392 573970
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660
 Suffolk 01449 900120
 www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
 enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE
 Land to the West of Wootton Road,
 Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxfordshire

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

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CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	27.11.20	1
APPROVED BY	RK	SCALE	@A4 1:25,000	

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 Ordnance Survey 0100031673



- Site boundary
- Evaluation trench
- Cut feature
- Excavated intervention
- Section location

Geophysics Key
(SUMO Geophysics Ltd, 2018)

- Uncertain origin (discrete anomaly/trend)
- Agriculture (plough)
- Ferrous



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Andover	01264 347630
Cirencester	01285 771022
Exeter	01392 826185
Milton Keynes	01908 564660
Suffolk	01449 900120

w www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
e enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE
Land to the West of Wootton Road,
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FIGURE TITLE
**Trench location plan showing
archaeological features and
geophysical survey results**

DRAWN BY	RP	PROJECT NO.	CR0524	FIGURE NO.
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APPROVED BY	RK	SCALE @A3	1:1000	

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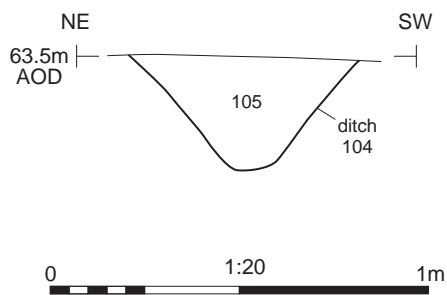


Trench 1, looking south-west (1m scales)



Ditch 104, looking south-east (0.5m scale)

Section AA



Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Exeter 01392 573970
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660
 Suffolk 01449 900120
 www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
 enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

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Land to the West of Wootton Road,
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FIGURE TITLE

Trench 1: section and photographs

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FIGURE NO.

3

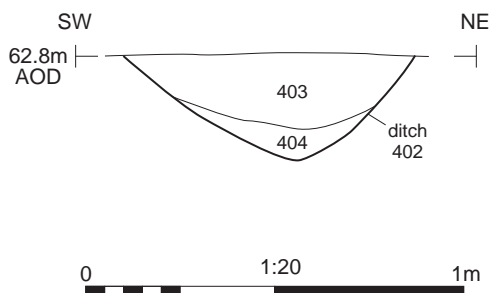


Trench 4, looking south-west (1m scales)



Ditch 402, looking east (0.5m scale)

Section BB



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Archaeology

Andover 01264 347630
Cirencester 01285 771022
Exeter 01392 573970
Milton Keynes 01908 564660
Suffolk 01449 900120
www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE

Land to the West of Wootton Road,
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FIGURE TITLE

Trench 4: section and photographs

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FIGURE NO.

4



5

Trench 2, looking north (1m scales)



6

Trench 3, looking north-west (1m scales)



7

Trench 5, looking south-east (1m scales)


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 enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE
 Land to the West of Wootton Road,
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FIGURE TITLE
Trenches 2, 3 and 5: photographs

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Andover Office

Stanley House
Walworth Road
Andover
Hampshire
SP10 5LH

t: 01264 347630

Cirencester Office

Building 11
Kemble Enterprise Park
Cirencester
Gloucestershire
GL7 6BQ

t: 01285 771022

Exeter Office

Unit 1, Clyst Units
Cofton Road
Marsh Barton
Exeter
EX2 8QW

t: 01392 573970

Milton Keynes Office

Unit 8 - The IO Centre
Fingle Drive, Stonebridge
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK13 0AT

t: 01908 564660

Suffolk Office

Unit 5, Plot 11, Maitland Road
Lion Barn Industrial Estate
Needham Market
Suffolk
IP6 8NZ

t: 01449 900120

e: enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

