

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

MILLEN COTTAGE, CHURCH ROAD

ARDLEY, OXFORDSHIRE

NGR SP 5420 2737

On behalf of

Mr and Mrs Cato

APRIL 2015

REPORT FOR Mr and Mrs Cato
Millen Cottage
Church Road
Ardley
Oxfordshire
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Site Code: ARCR 15

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SUMMARY

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief at Millen Cottage, Church Road, Ardley, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 5420 2737). Groundworks consisted of footings for a small extension, and reduction in ground level to accommodate a concrete slab for a garage. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located on the southern side of Ardley, on the north side of Church Road and west of St Mary's Church (NGR SP 54202737). The site lies at 121m AOD and the geology is White Limestone Formation.

1.2 Planning Background

Cherwell District Council granted planning permission for the erection of a single storey side extension and detached garage (14/02016/H). Due to the archaeological and historical importance of the surrounding area a condition was attached to the permission requiring a watching brief to be maintained during the course of building operations or construction works on the site. This was in line with NPPF and other Local Planning policies.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site is located in an area of archaeological potential within the historic core of the settlement. The site is located 40m west of the 14th century Parish Church of St Mary's (PRN 5095). Although the current Church is dated to the 14th century it may contain slightly earlier sections and it is known that there was a church in Ardley by 1074. In many settlements the church formed a focus of medieval activity. The site is also located approximately 120m south of surviving earthworks from the shrunken medieval village (PRN 9015) and a medieval hollow-way (PRN 1159). Another shrunken road and a series of boundary ditches were recorded during excavations 140m north of the Church, adjacent to the shrunken Village (PRN 16826).

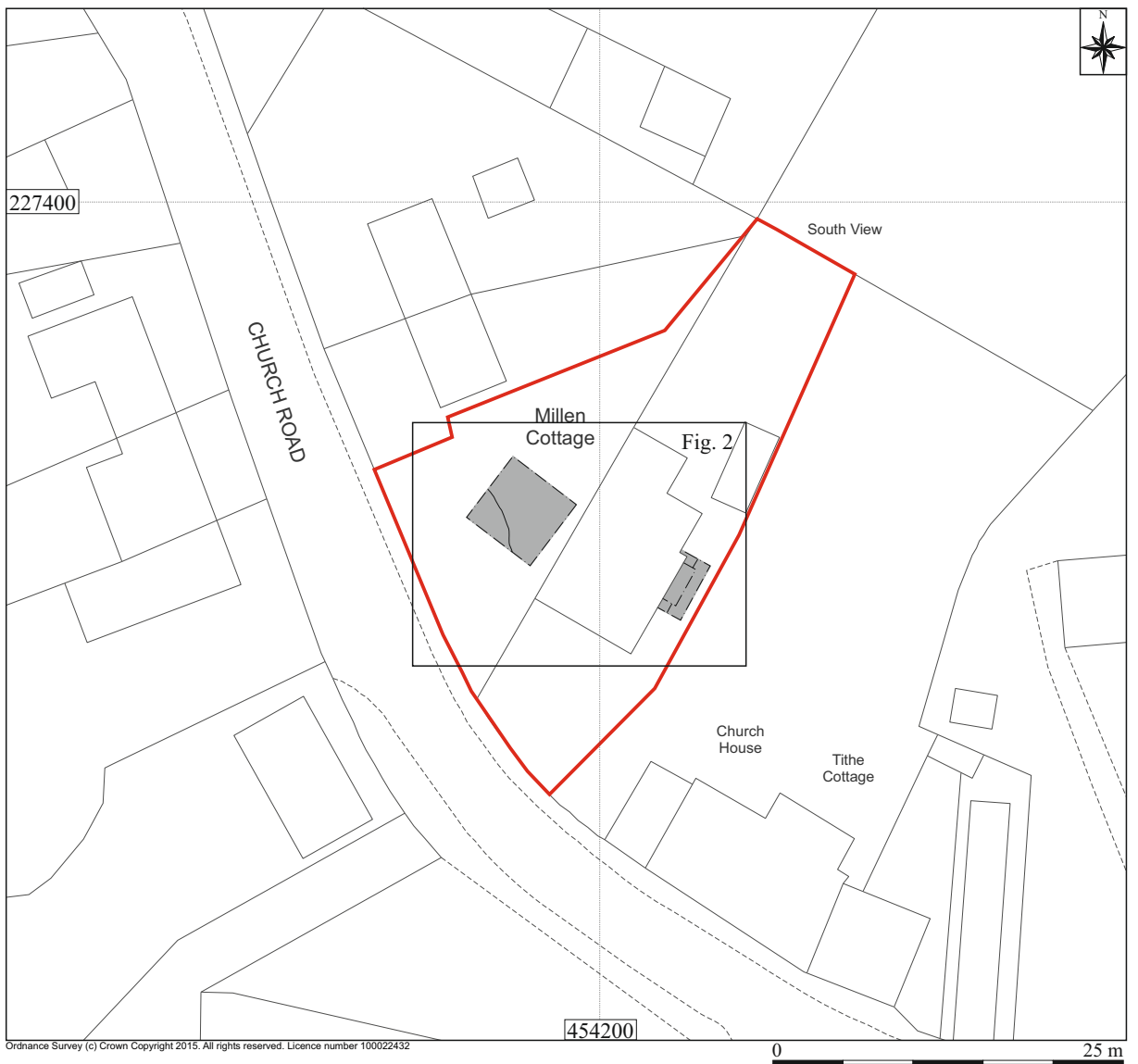
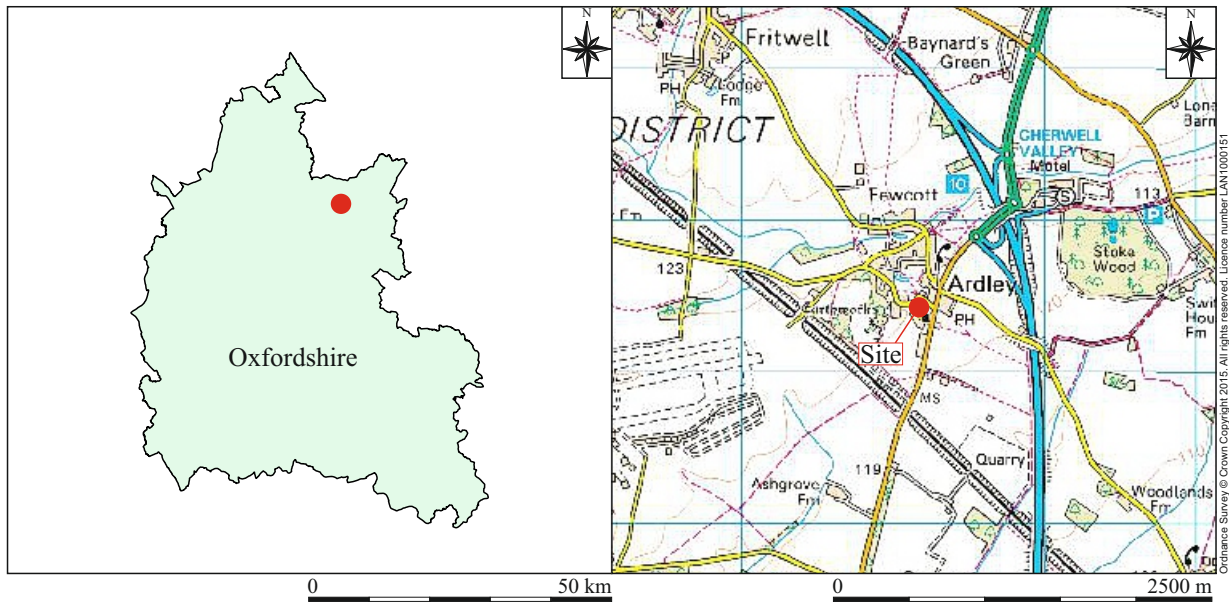
2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To make a record of any significant archaeological remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.

In particular:

- To record any remains associated with the medieval settlement of Ardley.



Key Site boundary Monitored areas

Figure 1: Site location

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Oxfordshire Historic and Natural Environment Team (OHaNET).

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (2014).

3.2 Methodology

An archaeologist was present on site during the course of any groundwork that had the potential to reveal or disturb archaeological remains.

Any archaeological deposits and features revealed were to be cleaned by hand and recorded in plan before being excavated and recorded at an appropriate level. Any archaeological features or other remains i.e. concentrations of artefacts, were to be recorded by written, drawn and photographic record. Where archaeological features were exposed during any ground reduction but otherwise would remain unaffected they were recorded only by plan and written description. Where remains would be impacted on then they would be sample excavated. Any variation to this was to be agreed with OHaNET, on behalf of the local planning authority. All artefacts would be collected and retained except for concentrations of building material where a representative sample will be kept.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was also produced.

4 RESULTS (Figure 2)

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.

Footings trench

The lowest deposit encountered in the footings trench was natural (104), a firm light yellowish brown silty clay with frequent sub angular stone (weathered top of White Limestone Formation). This deposit had a thickness of 0.1m, and extended below the limit of excavation. (104) was overlain by soil layer (103), a soft mid brownish grey silty clay with a thickness of 0.7m. (103) was truncated by 102, the footings trench for Millen Cottage; 102 had a depth of 0.8m in the trench, and extended below the limit of excavation. It was filled by (107), a concrete slab with a thickness of 0.2m, and (101) a soft dark greyish black silty clay loam containing moderate fragmented brick



Key Site boundary Monitored areas

Figure 2: Plan areas

and slate inclusions. This deposit was overlain by (100), a hardcore drive surface 0.2m thick that was present across the whole trench.

Garage slab trench

An area of 5.5m by 5.7m was reduced to a depth of 0.3m. The lowest deposit encountered in this area was natural (106), a firm mid yellowish brown silty clay, 4m in length by 2.3m in width, and with a thickness of 0.1m. This layer extended below the limit of excavation, and appeared to be the same as natural (104) in the footings trench. (106) was overlain by (105), a soft dark brownish black clayey silt loam, with a thickness of 0.3m. This layer also extended below the limit of excavation.

5 FINDS

No artefactual evidence was recovered.

6 DISCUSSION

No archaeological features or deposits were encountered in either trench. In the footings trench the foundations for Millen Cottage were shown to heavily truncate the underlying soil layers, reducing the potential for the preservation of any archaeological deposits.

Natural (106) was encountered at a depth of 0.2m below ground level in the garage trench, while natural (104) was encountered at 0.7m in the footings trench; this indicates that the soil depth increases substantially towards the north-eastern limit of the site.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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