



Land south of

Chipping Surgery

Symn Lane, Wotton-under-Edge
Gloucestershire

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Chipping Surgery

Symn Lane, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire

Historic environment desk based assessment

NGR: ST 75482 92984

Site code: WUE17

OASIS ID: 110archa1-279725

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March 2017

one ten archaeology

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SUMMARY

An historic environment desk based assessment was carried out during January to March 2017 at land to the south of Chipping Surgery, Symn Lane, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire. The work was requested in response for a proposal for residential development of the site.

The assessment concluded that the undated heritage asset recorded on the Historic Environment Record as a series of strip lynchets and an area of ridge and furrow are in fact terracing of probable geological origin caused by variations in the underlying rock strata and which may have been utilised for cultivation. The study site itself forms part of a low promontory or knoll on the western edge of a coombe of which there are many similar examples of natural terracing replicated on the slopes of the surrounding coombes along the Cotswold scarp.

Evidence for ridge and furrow to the south of the site is erroneous and the earthworks which have been dubiously identified from aerial photographs are probably remnants of a former 19th century field system established during the enclosures.

The impact of the proposed development on the site, which lies on a steep slope, is likely to be substantial with truncation of the underlying deposits resulting from excavation of strip foundations, associated services, roads and driveways. The proposed car-parking area covers a large area and will result in significant ground reduction. Further investigation through field evaluation may be able to establish the authenticity and archaeological significance of the heritage asset and the potential impact on this and its setting.

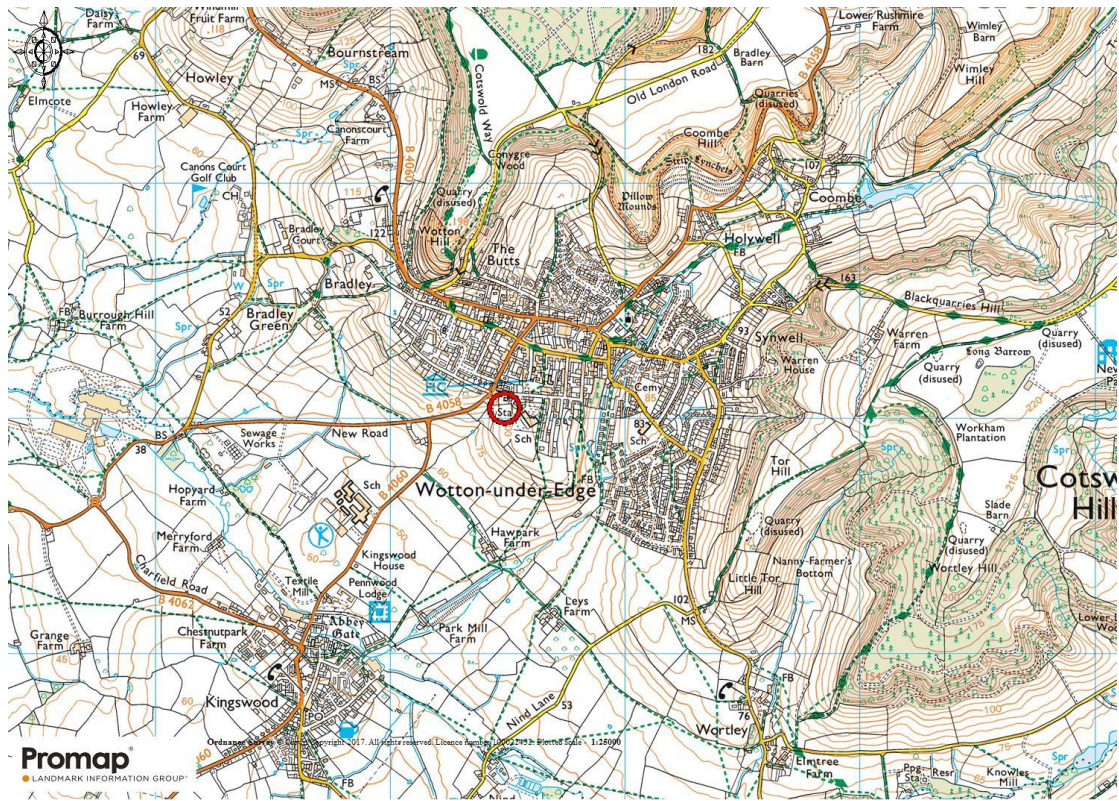


Fig.1; site location (circled in red)

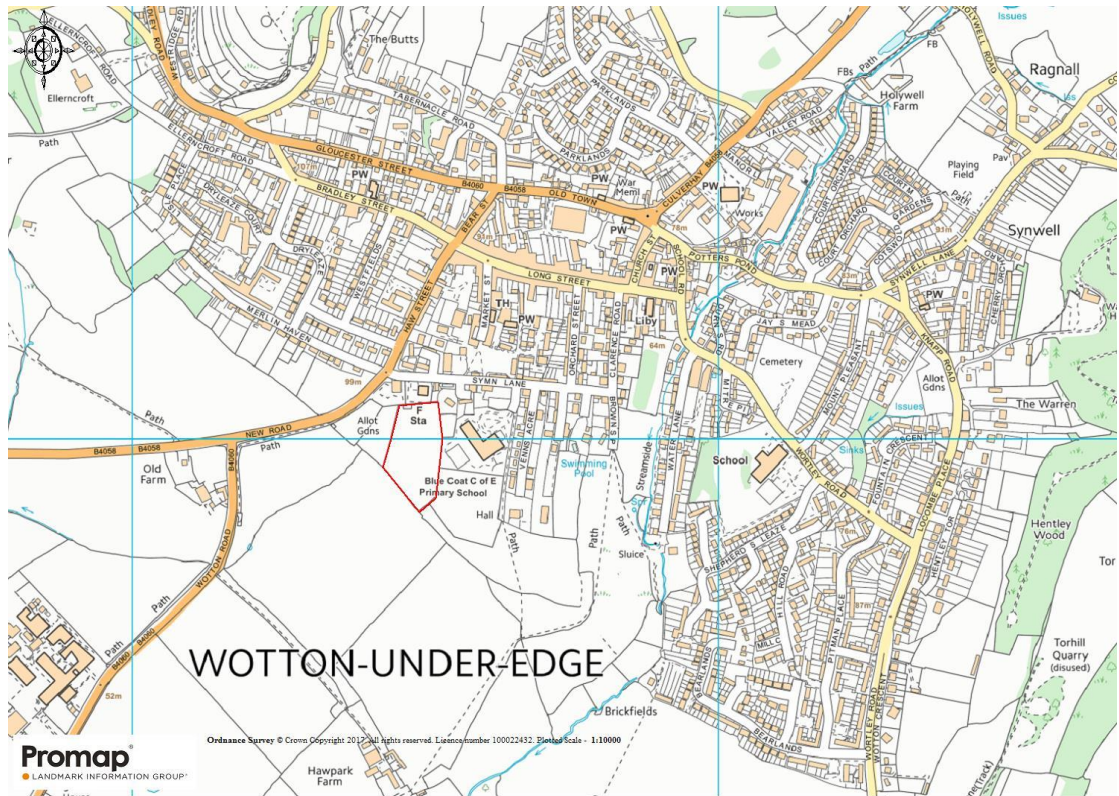


Fig. 2; study site (outlined in red)

INTRODUCTION

Location and scope of work (Figs. 1 & 2)

This document details the results of an historic environment desk based assessment during 19th January and 28th March 2017 at land to the south of Chipping Surgery, Symn Lane, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire, GL12 7BD.

The request for the assessment, outlined in a letter (Parry, 13th January, 2017) issued by the Archaeologist at Glos. CC, is a response to a proposal (planning ref; SDC/S16/2895/FUL) for the construction of ten houses with access road and car park for 96 cars and two coaches. It was recognised that there is potential within the site for the presence of significant archaeological remains that may be affected by proposed development and therefore an assessment of the archaeological implications is required in advance of consideration of the proposals.

It is stated that the proposed development area is located a little to the south of Wotton-under-Edge's medieval settlement area, and a further area of potential former settlement adjoins the application site to the south-west. In addition, the application site is recorded in the county Historic Environment Record (HER) as containing a substantial linear earthwork of uncertain date and function. Against this background, it was recognised that the application site may contain significant archaeological remains relating to an area of former settlement, which may be adversely affected by construction ground works required for the proposed development. In addition, in view of the presence of a substantial earthwork the proposed development may have an adverse impact on the setting of that heritage asset.

Therefore, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012), paragraph 128 (see below), it was recommended that in advance of the determination of this planning application that the applicant should provide the results of a programme of archaeological assessment and evaluation which describes the significance of any archaeological remains present within the application site, and how these would be affected by the proposed development.

NPPF Chapter 12; Paragraph 128 states:

'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected,

including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum, the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed, includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.'

The NPPF makes it clear that the setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced and states that the setting of a heritage asset can contribute to its significance. The Good Practice Guide (GPA) describes in detail the contribution of setting to the significance of a heritage asset.

The importance of setting is in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset. All heritage assets have significance, and, though many settings may be enhanced by development, not all settings have the same capacity to accommodate change without harm to the significance of the heritage asset. This requires the implications of development affecting the setting of heritage assets to be considered on a case-by-case basis following a methodical and staged process (described in GPA) intended to inform decision taking.

This specification has also been written in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologist's Guidance and Standards (CIfA, 2014) and serves to detail the methods and staffing for production of an historic environment desk-based assessment of the proposal area.

'A desk-based assessment will determine, as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, the nature, extent and significance of the historic environment within a specified area, and the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the historic environment, or will identify the need for further evaluation to do so (CIfA, 2014).'

Geology and topography (Figs. 3-5)



Fig. 3; view of Wotton Hill from the north

The Cotswold Edge

The fabric of the Cotswolds is made up of sediments built up on a sea floor, the softer Lias (Clay) stones underneath and the harder Oolites on top. Since that time the old sea bed has been lifted with a shallow dip to the south-east and a scarp slope along its extant west and north-west limit. This scarp slope is serrated with deep coombes, each with its own subsidiary water-courses. This area was south of the great ice-sheet but snow and ice would accumulate in colder snatches and the floods from snowmelt would be a temporary but very powerful force cutting into the steep western scarp. Below the top of the formation there is a lower platform; the result of a harder ferruginous layer protecting the softer deposits below from erosion. The steep upper slopes and concave profile is diagnostic of the landscape of the Cotswold Edge.

The present area of study, comprising approx. 1.34ha, is sited toward the top of this lower terrace just south of the main settlement and on the western slope of a small knoll. This is flanked by the main brook, with mills, to the east and a smaller, mostly lost, water course to the west.

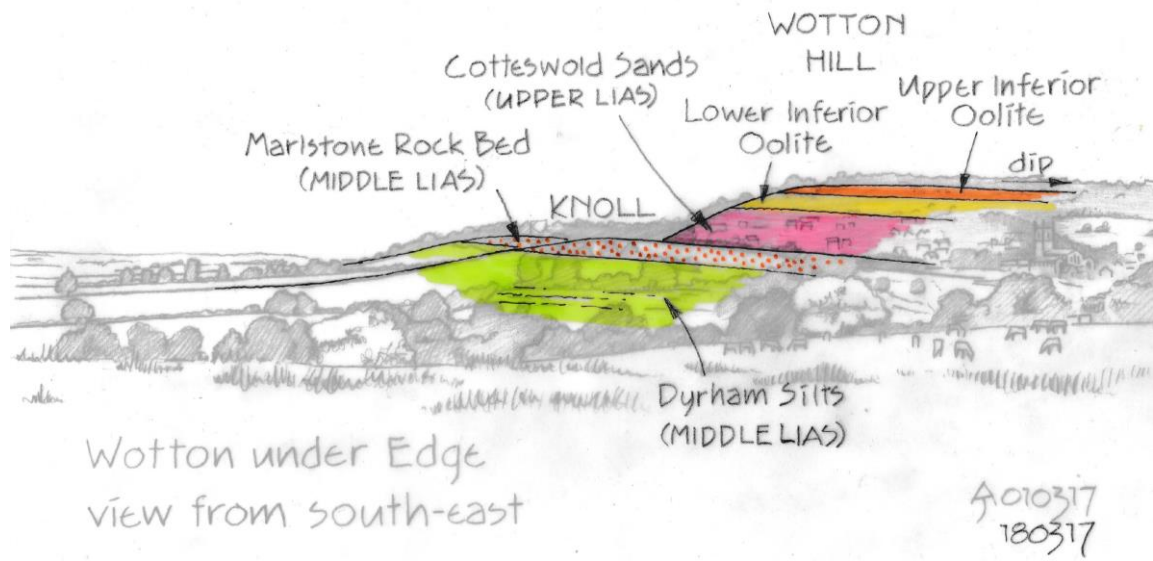


Fig. 4; Wotton under Edge

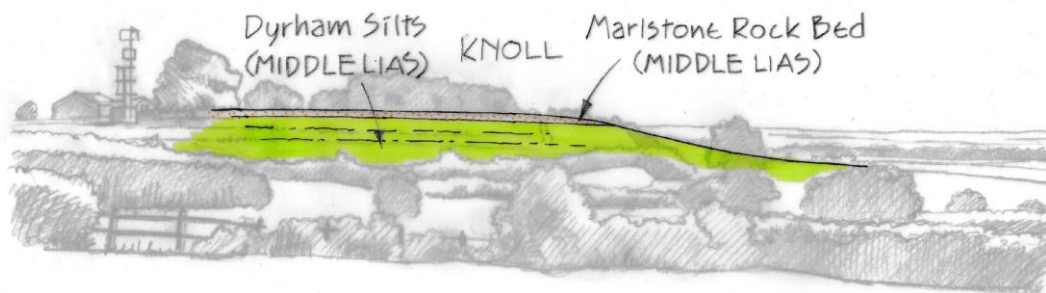


Fig. 5; view of the site, from the west



Plate 1; north end of the study site, view to the west.



Plate 2; view (to the south-west) of profile (terracing) along the west side of the study site



Plate 3; view of the study site and terracing, from the north



Plate 4; view to the south-west of the dry valley west of the study site



Plate 5; view along the south end of the study site, from the east



Plate 6; view of the study site, from the west

ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND; *summary of results*

Prehistoric

The Historic Environment Record (HER) records two stray finds from within the 500m search radius centered on the site. Both are stone axes. The first, from Wotton Under Edge (HER 16926), is reported to be of group IX type according to the CBA petrology index (Petrology index number 1413, county number 67). The other (HER 16929) in a private collection, is from Tabernacle Road and reported by CBA petrology index, of slate.

Roman

Roman activity within the search area also consists of stray finds. A Romano-British brooch (HER 2830) was found in the parish in 1883 and is in the Sir John Evan's collection in the Ashmolean Museum. A stone votive tablet (HER 2860), in private possession depicting three Celtic mother goddesses may originate from this area, or from Kingscote (Gloucestershire HER 325) further east. A coin of Gallienus (AD 259-268) has been found (HER 2861) in Holywell in the fork of the side road leaving the main road up Rushmires Hill from Wotton.

Saxon/early medieval

There is no recorded Saxon activity within the search area, but medieval remains (HER 36999) recorded as building features of 11th to 12th century date, possibly earlier, were found at the Christian Centre in the Old Town area of Wotton during archaeological investigation (Yeates, 2010).

Medieval

The existing medieval monuments recorded in the HER clearly show that Wotton-under-Edge developed significantly during this period. St Mary's Church (HER 8287) is 13th century and the medieval weekly market (HER 20934) established in 1252 was held in the Stony chipping area (HER 11244; place name), from which the study site gets its name, although as the market area increased in size and popularity it expanded into the Green Chipping (Douthwaite, 1996).

HER 2874; Site of medieval Friary of Crutched Friars A licence for the foundation of a house of Crutched Friars in Wotton-under-Edge was granted by Edward III in 1349.

An evaluation (HER 20707) on land to the rear of 17-19 Church Street and 9b Long Street revealed a buried plough soil interpreted as medieval, two

undated features that may be natural, and a late medieval or early post-medieval drainage gully. Wall footings were interpreted as the south-east corner of an outbuilding shown on the 1763 Berkeley Castle Estate map.

An archaeological evaluation at 30 Long Street (HER 26860) produced a few sherds of residual medieval pottery retrieved from later post-medieval layers (Rowe, 2004). Another evaluation (Yeates, 2010) at the Christian Centre, Old Town identified the remains of substantial medieval wall, possibly the borough town wall (HER 37000).

Post-medieval

Almshouses (HER 2881) dated from 1638 are located at Church Street and some former mills are also recorded within the search area. There is documentary evidence for a Paper mill linked to Kingswood Abbey, Water Lane in 1537 (HER 6511), a Cloud Mill (HER 6510) in 1763 and Waterloo Mill (HER 6518) situated at edge of car park in Potter's Road which has a date of 1815 on a stone plate.

An archaeological watching brief at 27 Long Street (HER 22066) recorded evidence of a post-medieval/modern stone and brick built water cistern/soakaway (Vartuca, 2002). At the Wotton-under-Edge Community Sports Foundation an evaluation (HER 32744) revealed ditches representing former post-medieval field boundaries (Havard, 2008) which had been previously identified by desk-based assessment (SMR 32421). An archaeological watching brief (HER 27849) at Haw Street recorded a well (Barrett, 2005).

Modern

Steep mill/ Church Mill at Ludgate Hill is the site of one of the first purpose built steam Mills in the county (HER 20454). The main mill building on the site was erected shortly after 1800. Another early steam mill (HER 2878), now occupied by Cotswold Book Rooms Ltd is recorded in the Old Town. An evaluation on the site Britannia Mill (HER 6507) mentioned in 1823 revealed mill walls and drainage ditches (Tavener, 2000).

A watching brief (HER 48291) at Webbs Yard, 11 Haw Street and recorded features comprising post-holes and/or parts of building footings, pits, and the northeast corner of a brick basement of post-medieval to modern date (Crees, 2015).

Undated

The study site lies within an area (HER 38251) identified during the National Mapping Programme as containing earthworks visible on aerial photographs

interpreted as medieval, post-medieval ridge and furrow and strip lynchets, located to the south of Symn Lane. Only one block of ridge and furrow was still visible as earthworks on aerial photographs taken in 2004, the other block was levelled due to the construction of an adjacent school.

Similar earthworks, also interpreted as strip lynchets (HER 38252) are visible in the area north of Brickfields. These earthworks have been built over by modern housing.

An area of earthworks (HER 38253) defined by linear banks and ditches have been identified (NMP) to the northeast of Leys Farm and interpreted as medieval, post medieval-field boundaries and ridge and furrow.

Earthworks (HER 4541) interpreted as cultivation terraces (Brown, S., pers. comm.) are recorded

Similar earthwork terracing (HER 4543) interpreted possible medieval strip lynchets or cultivation terraces?

Earthworks (HER 4040) located to the north of Hawpark Farm, also identified during the NMP have been interpreted as an area of possible depopulation of probable medieval, post-medieval date. Linear features and other nebulous earthworks visible on the photographs appear to be old field boundaries and possible field drains; a possible pond and vestiges of house platforms.

A geophysical survey (HER 32414) was undertaken in 2008 covering 15 hectares. The survey produced only minimal findings which could be consistent with the presence of archaeological features. These include a few inconclusive pit-like features (which could be of modern origin), and short ditch-like features. A possible former field boundary was also detected. Archaeological features could perhaps be obscured in some parts of the site by magnetic interference from the modern rubbish dumping, but the greater part of the site remains sufficiently undisturbed for archaeologically significant anomalies to be identifiable.

A watching brief at Webbs Yard, 11 Haw Street (HER 48291) recorded, sealed below subsoil, the remains of an undated terminus of a northwest-southeast aligned ditch, and a post-hole (Crees, 2015).

Impact of the development (Figs. 6 & 7)

1: the heritage assets and their settings affected

The study site lies within an area (HER 38251) identified during the National Mapping Programme visible on aerial photographs as containing heritage assets interpreted as agricultural earthworks associated with an ancient landscape.

The assessment has shown that the more obvious of the two earthworks is situated along the western side and a site visit confirmed this as quite substantial terracing on two levels. The other feature which straddles most of the eastern boundary, appears as a much shallower form of terracing. Other monuments in the area with equivalent profiles have been interpreted as probable terraces for cultivation. Possible ridge & furrow along the southern edge of the study site could not be confirmed on the aerial photographs or at ground level and are probably the remnants of a former 19th century field system created during the enclosures.

The visual setting of the study site, situated on the west side of the knoll, has been changed by the steady encroachment of the town through gradual growth and development of the surrounding area. Settlement has spread westwards from the church initially during the medieval and post-medieval periods along Old Town and Long Street. The area south up to Symn Lane became largely developed from the mid-19th century and the south side of the Lane which marks the northern boundary of the study site has been subsequently built over during the 20th century with the existing fire station, surgery and residential housing. The east side of the knoll, on the slopes beyond the brook has already been developed with a substantial housing estate.

The geological evidence suggests that the terracing clearly visible within the study site is a natural formation that follows the variations in geology, whether these areas were previously utilised for cultivation is unclear. It may be significant that the lower terrace is currently used as a track leading around the knoll following the 92m contour and may be associated with later changes brought about during the enclosures which can be seen in the field pattern in the sloping land to the south. The ridge and furrow identified along the southern edge of the study site may represent the ghost remains of these former field boundaries that were

mapped in 1842 and which follow a similar alignment. These were replaced by the existing boundary.

2: assessment of the contribution of settings to the significance of the heritage asset.

The study site is currently undeveloped and the heritage asset, which has been identified from the assessment as natural terracing and the probable ghost remains of former field boundaries, appear to characterise the significance of the archaeological context and existing setting of the site.

The fire station and the surgery buildings along the northern edge of the study site represent social infrastructure changes during 20th century expansion of the town and form a significant part of the visual setting. Additional, sympathetic development to the south of these buildings could be construed as beneficial to the setting of the site, justifying the location of the surgery and fire station.

A recently bespoke residential development to the south of the surgery has set a precedent for additional housing.

3: an assessment of the effects of the proposed development

The assessment has shown that the significance of the heritage asset is questionable. Features interpreted as of archaeological interest are likely to be of natural origin or the remnants of a 19th century field system. The proposed development may therefore be considered unlikely to be harmful and could be viewed as beneficial to the setting of the study site by incorporating it within the southern boundary of the existing town.

4: ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm

Further investigation of the heritage asset through trial trenching could establish its significance and will provide evidence for the effects of development. The results could then be used for the basis of a sympathetic design proposal that can be incorporated into the profile of the study site to avoid or minimise the impact on the heritage asset and its setting.

5: documenting decisions and monitoring outcomes

Should the site be further investigated through evaluation (trial trenching), there will be adequate opportunities to update if necessary the progress of any development related proposal and the impact on the heritage asset and its setting.

DISCUSSION (Fig. 8)

Prehistoric

No archaeological deposits or finds related to this period have been found within the study site. Stray axe finds have been made to the north of the town at The Butts and at Tabernacle Road, therefore the potential for the survival of prehistoric archaeology is considered low.

Roman

Roman activity within the search area surrounding the study site is confirmed by the discovery of stray Roman finds. The evidence suggests that there is low potential for the presence of Roman archaeology within the study site.

Saxon/early medieval

There is at present no archaeological evidence for deposits associated with either the Saxon or early Medieval periods situated within the study site or in the immediate area and the potential for their presence is considered low.

Medieval

A series of linear earthworks situated within the study site have been interpreted as probable strip lynchets and ridge and furrow features possibly attributed to medieval cultivation. The archaeological record would therefore suggest a high potential for medieval deposits being situated within the study site. However, the results of this assessment places doubt on the validity of the record.

Post-medieval

Earthworks identified as possible medieval ridge and furrow (above) are also recorded as of possible post-medieval date. On this basis there is high potential for such features being sited within the study site, but as mentioned previously, the validity of the record is dubious.

Modern

There is clear cartographic evidence (1842) that former field boundaries, probably related to the enclosures were aligned across the southern half of the study site. It is the ghost remnants of these features that may have been misinterpreted as ridge and furrow.

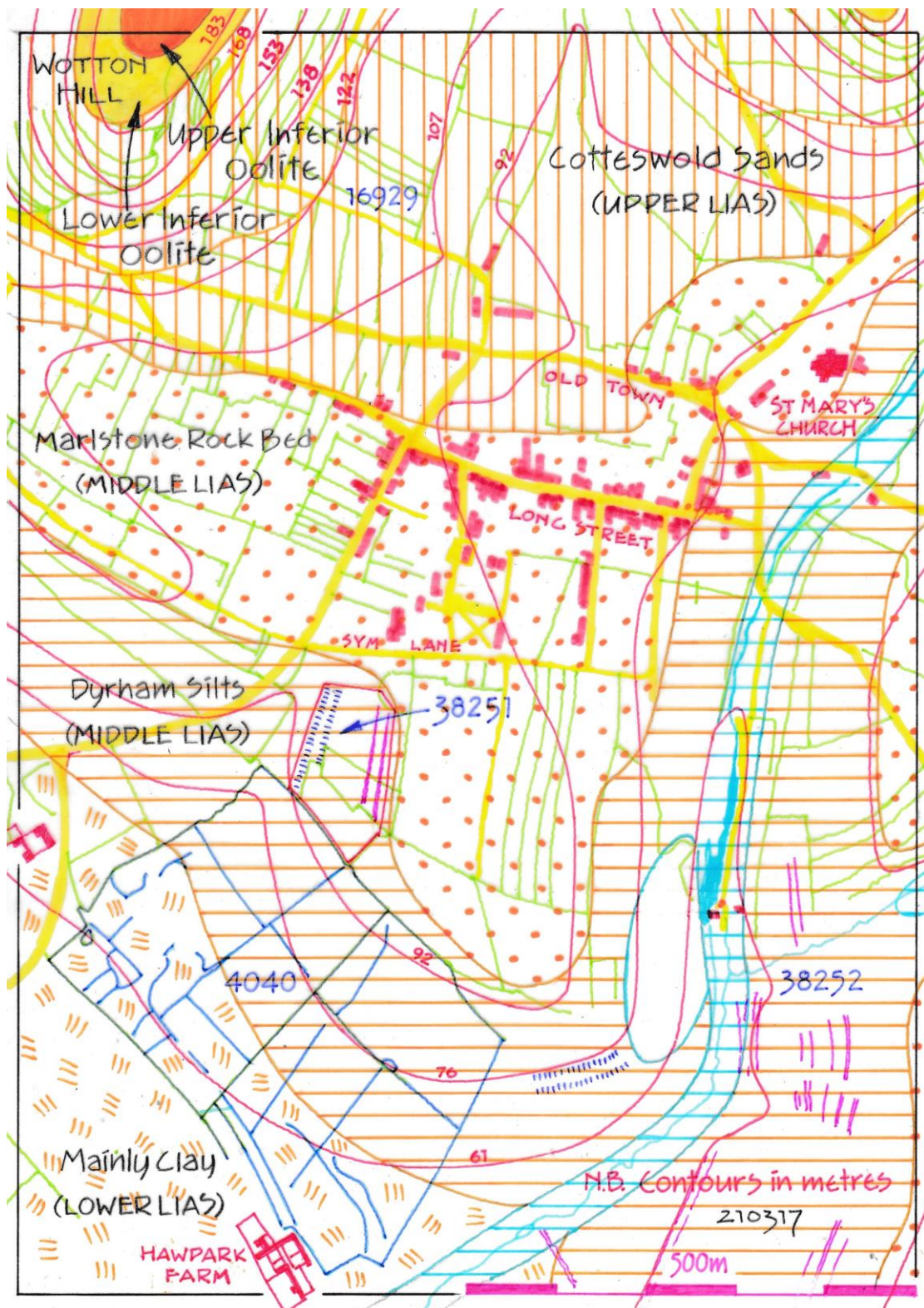


Fig. 8; Yellow; roads. Green; field boundaries taken from 1842 Tithe map. Red; historic buildings. Blue; water.

Undated

The assessment identified within the study site a heritage asset recorded in the HER (38251) as a probable medieval/post-medieval monument. This is comprised of earthworks described as strip lynchets and ridge and furrow, an interpretation that appears to have been based solely on a 1946 aerial photograph in the national collection, no oblique examples are available.

The strip lynchets-banks of earth that build up on the downslope of a field ploughed over a long period and a characteristic feature of ancient field systems, are recorded as represented by two parallel earthworks aligned north-south along the western edge of the site. A site visit connected with this assessment has confirmed that these features are in fact two parallel levels of terracing. The geological evidence suggests that this is a natural phenomenon caused by variations in the underlying rock strata which can be seen replicated on the slopes of the surrounding coombes. These may have been utilised for cultivation. The study site itself forms part of a low knoll on the western edge of a coombe of which there are many similar examples along the slope of the Cotswold scarp.

The two much less pronounced parallel features along the east side of the study site appear to represent another area of terracing, possibly also of geological origin.

An area of ridge and furrow, not clear during the site visit, is recorded aligned east-west along the southern edge of the site. Analysis of the cartographic sources, particularly the 1842 Tithe map suggests that these features are in fact the remnants of former field boundaries connected with the enclosures.

Conclusion

The impact of the development on the site is likely to be substantial with truncation of the underlying deposits resulting from strip foundations, construction of associated services, driveways and parking areas. The proposed car-parking area covers a large area and will result in significant ground reduction.

The assessment has concluded that that the heritage asset which will be impacted on by the proposal is recorded as strip lynchets and ridge and furrow. This interpretation which is based primarily on features identified on a 1946 vertical photograph is highly questionable and that these features probably represent natural geological terracing and the remnants of 19th century field boundaries.

The assessment has shown that the significance of the heritage asset is questionable and that the proposed development may therefore be considered unlikely to be harmful. Further investigation of the heritage asset through trial trenching could establish its significance and provide evidence for the effects of development.

Methodology

The assessment has been compiled in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologist's Guidance and Standards for an historic environment desk based assessment (CIfA, 2014).

The Historic Environment Record (HER) was consulted with a search focused within a 500m radius centred on the site. Significant information from the HER, Gloucester Record Office, historic maps aerial photographs viewed at the Historic England Archive at the National Monuments Record Centre, Swindon was incorporated into the Historic environment illustration (Fig. 8). A visit to the study site was also made during the assessment.

Timescales used in this report:

Prehistoric BC450,000-AD43

Palaeolithic 450,000-12,000 BC

Mesolithic 12,000-4,000 BC

Neolithic 4,000-1,800 BC

Bronze Age 1,800-600 BC

Iron Age 600-AD43

Roman AD43-410

Saxon/early medieval AD410-1066

Medieval AD 1066-1530

Post-medieval AD 1530-1800

Modern AD 1800-present

Archive Location

The digital archive arising from the work will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) and an online form submitted to OASIS (see Appendix 1).

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Aerial Photographs

- C.P.E./U.K./1961.9thAPRIL47:F.L.20"/16,400'.82SQDN
- ZEISS 054 12" 7500' 31ST JULY 1969 GLOS:"B" BIK2
- ZEISS 049. 12" 7,500' 10JUNE1968.GLOS."B" BLK2. (1/2500 REVISION)

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APPENDIX 1 OASIS

Project name	Land south of Chipping Surgery, Symn Lane, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire; desk based assessment
Project dates	Start: 19-01-2017 End: 28-03-2017
Previous/future work	No / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	WUE17 - Sitecode
Type of project	Desk based assessment
Site status	None
Current Land use	Grassland Heathland 2 - Undisturbed Grassland
Monument type	RIDGE AND FURROW Medieval
Monument type	CULTIVATED TERRACES Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	""Aerial Photography - interpretation"", ""Documentary Search"", ""Visual Inspection""
Development type	Housing estate
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Country	England
Site location	GLOUCESTERSHIRE STROUD WOTTON UNDER EDGE land south of Chipping Surgery, Symn Lane
Postcode	GL12 7BD.
Study area	1.34 Hectares
Site coordinates	ST 75482 92984 51.634661673202 -2.354300012648 51 38 04 N 002 21 15 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 0m Max: 0m
Name of Organisation	one ten archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	one ten archaeology
Project director/manager	sean cook
Project supervisor	sean cook
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	OASIS
Paper Archive Exists?	No
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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