



Land south of

# Chipping Surgery

Symn Lane, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire

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Symn Lane, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire

Archaeological evaluation

NGR: ST 75482 92984

Site code: WUE17

OASIS: 110archa1-288827

Sean Cook BA MCIfA

Illustration by Jill Atherton MCIfA

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Front cover; evaluation trench 4, view to the south

## SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was carried out during May and June 2017 at land south of Chipping Surgery, Symn Lane, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire in pre-determination of an application to develop the site for residential use and car parking.

The evaluation represented the culmination of an investigation of the site that initially comprised an historic desk based assessment followed by a geophysical survey the results of which were used for a subsequent trenching strategy. The evaluation confirmed the conclusions of the assessment that the undated heritage asset recorded on the Historic Environment Record as a series of undated earthworks interpreted as strip lynchets and an area of ridge and furrow to south, were in fact natural terracing characteristic of the geology represented in the Cotswold Edge.

A single post-medieval ditch of probable early 18<sup>th</sup> century date overserved on the line of a boundary mapped in 1842 represented the only archaeological feature recorded within the study site.

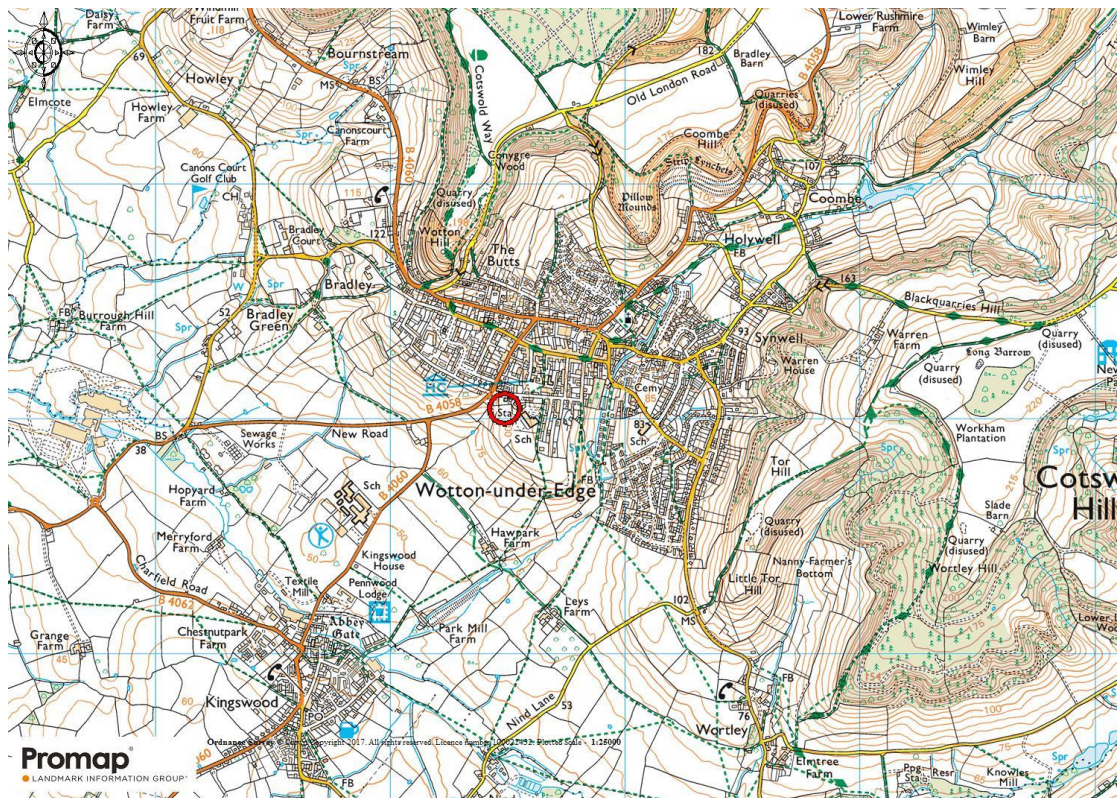


Fig. 1; site location (circled in red)

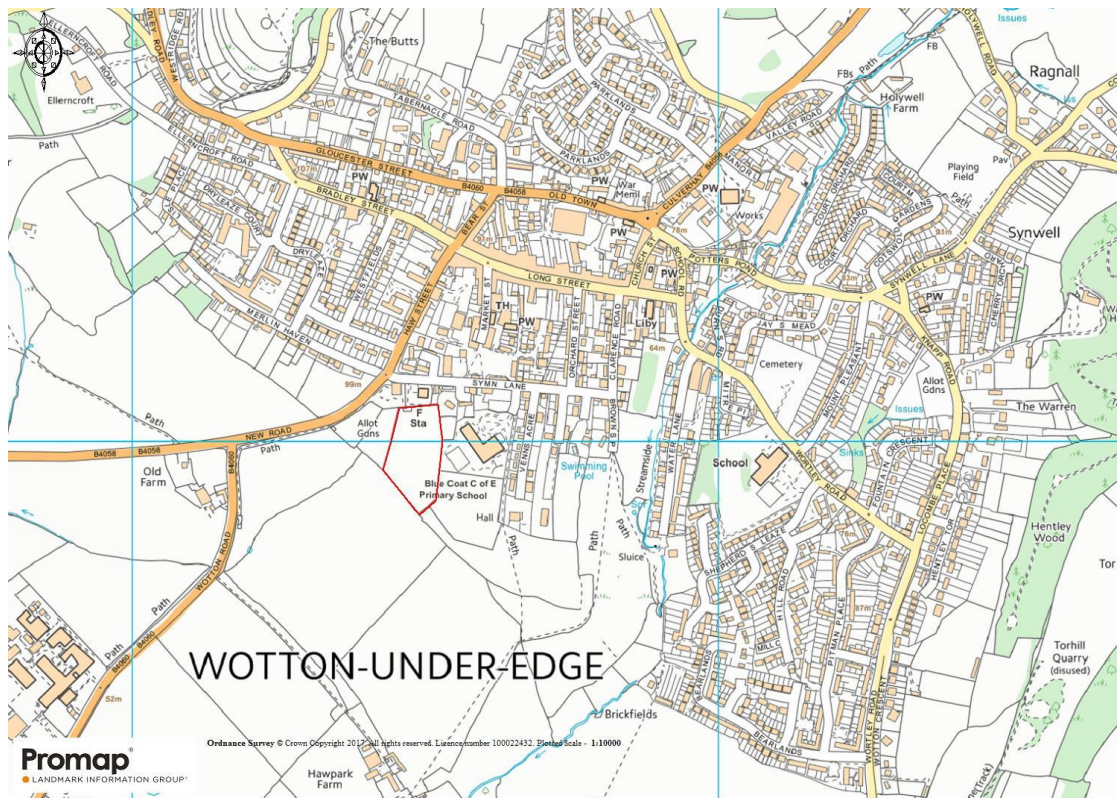


Fig. 2; study site (outlined in red)

## INTRODUCTION

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

This document details the results of an archaeological evaluation during 30<sup>th</sup> May to 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2017 at land south of Chipping Surgery, Symn Lane, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire, GL12 7BD. The request for the evaluation, by the Archaeologist at Glos. CC, was 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 was 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 the 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.

Following completion of the assessment (Cook & Atherton, 2017) a geophysical survey (Davies, 2017) was recommended to determine the potential of the site. The results of the survey were used to determine the locations of the trenches for the subsequent field evaluation described in this document.

### *Geology and topography*

The present area of study, comprising approx. 1.34ha, is sited toward the top of the lower terrace of the Cotswold Edge, just south of the main settlement and on the western slope of a small knoll. A detailed study of the geology topography of the area was carried out in the previous historic environment desk based assessment (Cook & Atherton, 2017) which identified the underlying geology as comprising Middle Lias and this was confirmed situated at approx. 99m AOD during the trench excavation.

### *Archaeological and historical background*

The desk based 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

## EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

### *Aims of the work*

The objectives of the evaluation were to determine the date, character, quality, survival and extent of the archaeological deposits within the application area likely to be threatened by the proposed development in order that an informed decision on their importance in a local, regional and national context can be made. This information will clarify whether any remains should be considered for preservation *in situ*, or form the basis of a mitigation strategy.

#### *Sample size and scope of fieldwork*

The evaluation comprised an investigation of the whole of the study site equating to an approx. 2% sample or 270m<sup>2</sup> of excavated trenching. This was excavated with 180m of linear trenching at approx. 1.50m wide. Trenching strategy was designed to target potential archaeological features identified during the previous geophysical survey (Davies, 2017) whilst also investigating areas of the site for small discrete features such as small pits, post-holes and gullies that could not be identified by the survey. Trench 1 was positioned along the higher northern half of the site where the area is plateaued and the survey had identified possible furrow features aligned roughly east-west, whilst trenches 2 and 3 were located within the southern half of the site to transect further possible furrow features and a possible ditch aligned north-east to south-west. Trench 5 transected the north-south aligned earthwork situated along the western edge of the site.

#### *Fieldwork methods and recording*

The archaeological field work and post-excavation was carried out in accordance with standards and guidance for archaeological field evaluations produced by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA, 2014). All deposits were excavated removing the overburden under close archaeological supervision and investigated for archaeological features which then sampled by hand excavation. Plans and sample sections of the trenches were made and recorded during the excavation.

#### RESULTS: GENERAL (Fig. 3)

##### *Soil and ground conditions*

Conditions were generally dry during excavation, with deposits showing little moisture retention. Excavation was relatively smooth in all five trenches being



made through alternate layers of topsoil and underlying subsoil leaving a clean and visible surface on the natural substrate.

#### *Reliability of field investigation*

There was no evidence to suggest truncation of the underlying deposits through modern disturbance indicating that stratified deposits are likely survive relatively intact across the site.

#### *Distribution of archaeological deposits*

The natural substrate was reached throughout the length of all five of the excavated trenches. Two in-filled cut features (304 & 404), interpreted as segments of the same former field boundary ditch were observed cut into the surface of the natural clay in trenches 3 and & 4. Finds recovered from sample excavation of the fill deposits confirmed the post-medieval date for construction of the feature.

#### *Presentation of results*

The results of the excavation (below) are described from the earliest to the latest deposits. The trench was attributed context numbers with a numerical value equivalent to the number of the trench.

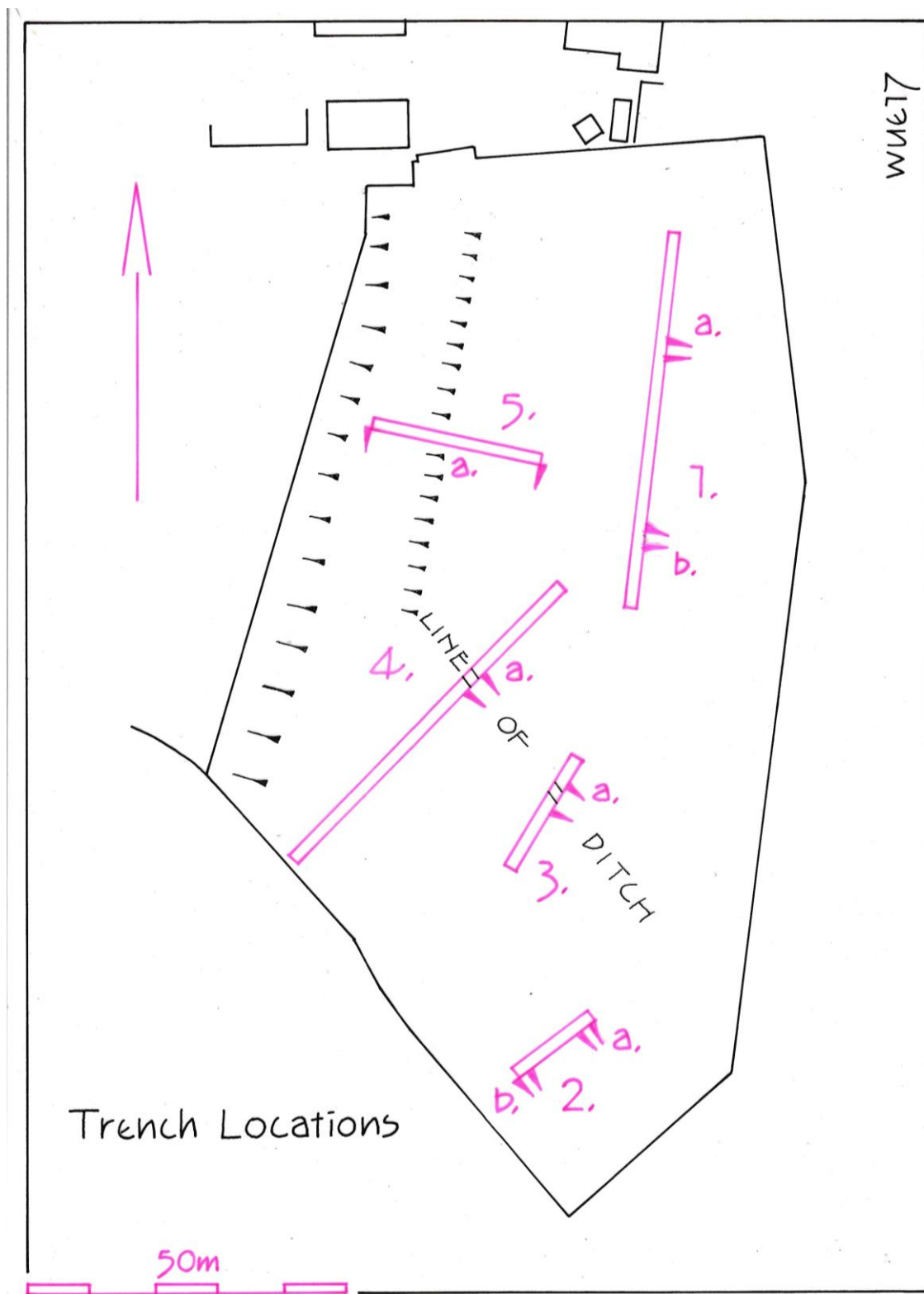


Fig. 3; Trench plan showing main archaeological features

## RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS (Figs. 4 & 5)

### *TRENCHES 1-5*

#### *Context 102, 202, 302, 402 & 502 (natural geology)*

The surface of the natural substrate, comprising a light yellowish-brown Lias clay with a component of small fragments of limestone, was exposed throughout all five trenches. Trench 1, aligned north-south along the high plateaued area situated within the northern half of the site, revealed the natural substrate at a roughly level height of about 99.40m AOD. No archaeological deposits or cut features were observed within or overlying this layer.

Trenches 2, 3 and 4 were situated on the downward slope within the southern half of the site. Trench 2 recorded natural clay at the north-east end at 99.35m AOD falling to 96.62m at the south-west end of the trench. No archaeological deposits or cut features were observed in association with this layer.

In trenches 3 & 4 the natural clay (302 & 402) was cut by two ditches (304 & 404) which were interpreted as segments of the same feature (see below).

#### *Context 304 (ditch) filled by 303 & context 404 (ditch) filled by 403*

Situated approx. mid-way along both trenches 3 and 4 was a segment of ditch (304 & 404). Each were sampled through hand excavation removing a single fill (303 & 403) from both features to reveal a shared profile comprising of a roughly V-shaped construction cut. In trench 3 the ditch was 2.10m wide and about 0.55m deep with gradually sloping sides to about half-way down after which the profile becomes much steeper. The base of the ditch is flat and about 0.20m wide. It was filled by a mid-yellowish-greyish brown, clayey-silt (303) with a component of charcoal flecking and small fragments of limestone. Finds comprised fragments of animal bone and pottery indicating an early 18<sup>th</sup> century date.

Ditch 404 was 2.10m wide and about 0.50m deep with steep sides to a pointed, rounded base. It was filled by a single deposit (403) equivalent with fill deposit 303 and produced finds consisting of a small quantity of animal bone and pottery dated to the late 16<sup>th</sup> century.

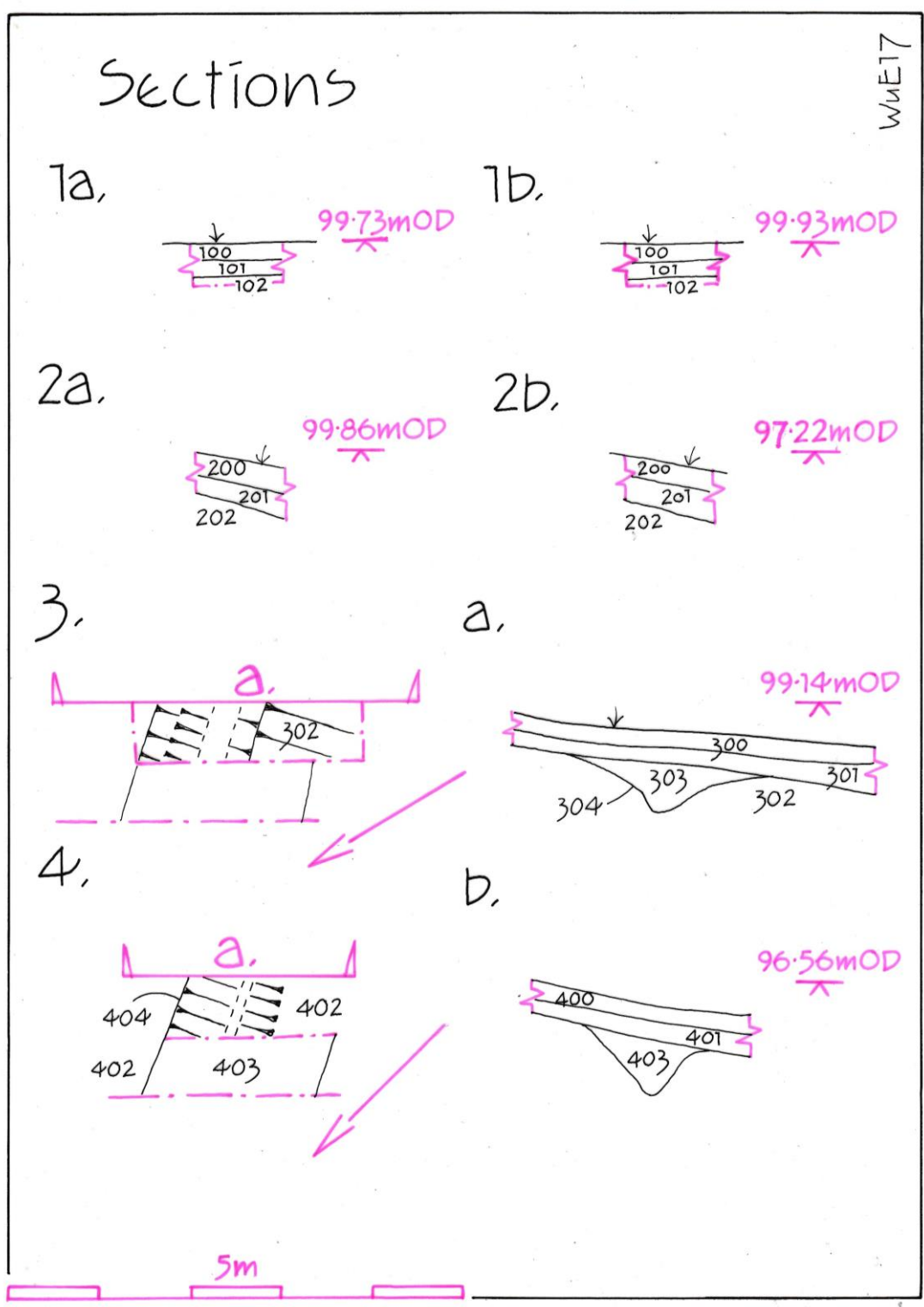


Fig. 4; Trenches 1 & 2, sample sections; trenches 3 & 4 with plans & sections of ditches 304 & 404.

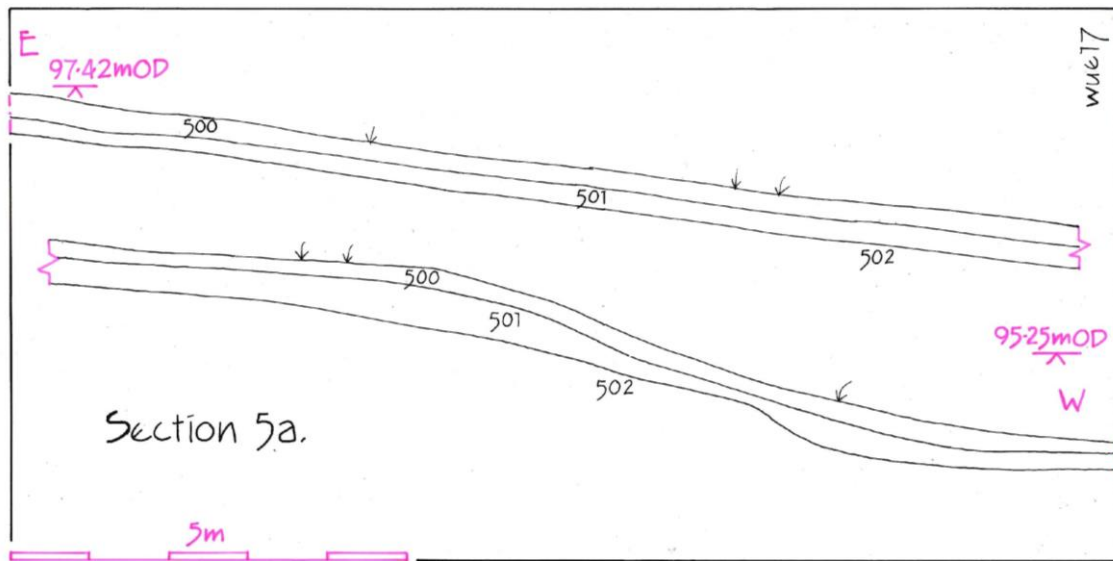


Fig. 5; section 5a

*Context 101, 201, 301, 401 & 501 (relict subsoil layer)*

Overlying the natural clay throughout all five trenches and sealing the two ditch fills (304 & 404) was a layer of relict subsoil consisting of a light-mid-greyish-brown, clayey-silt. This deposit varied in thickness from 0.15m on the highest, northern part of the site (trench 1) to about 0.35m thick on the southern downward slope (trenches 2-4). In trench 5, the equivalent deposit (501) varied in thickness from 0.25m at the eastern end to 0.55m at the top break of slope of the terrace, a characteristic feature on the western edge of the site. Finds from these deposits consisted of animal bone and pottery, including ceramic building material ranging in date from the early/mid-12<sup>th</sup> century to modern.

*Contexts 100, 200, 300, 400 & 500 (modern topsoil)*

Overlying the subsoil deposit in all five trenches was the modern topsoil comprising a dark greyish-brown loam varying between 0.20-30m thick in trenches 1-4 and 0.25-0.35m thick in trench 5. No finds were recovered from any of these layers.



Plate 1; trench 1, view north



Plate 2; section 1b



Plate 3; trench 2, view south



Plate 4; Section 2b



Plate 5; ditch 304, view south-west



Plate 6; ditch 406, view west





Plate 7; trench 5; east end, view to the south-west



Plate 8; trench 5; section 5a, west end, view to the south-west

## FINDS

### Pottery and CBM by *Paul Blinkhorn*

#### *The pottery*

The pottery assemblage comprised 49 sherds with a total weight of 747g. It was largely, if not completely, post-medieval, and was recorded using the conventions of the Gloucester City type-series (eg. Vince 1984), as follows:

TF44: Minety-type Ware, early/mid-12<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> century. 2 sherds, 20g.

TF52: Oxidized glazed Malvernian Ware, 14<sup>th</sup> - early 17<sup>th</sup> century. 29 sherds, 524g.

TF60: Cistercian Ware, late 15<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> century. 1 sherd, 32g.

TF61: Staffordshire Black-Glazed Earthenwares, late 17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> century. 1 sherd, 5g.

TF62: Anglo-Dutch Tin-Glazed Earthenware, 17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> century. 2 sherds, 5g.

TF67: Staffordshire White Salt-Glazed Stoneware, AD1720-1780. 1 sherd, 19g.

TF68: German Stoneware, 1550 - 1700. 1 sherd, 8g.

TF71: Transfer-printed White Earthenware, 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> century. 1 sherd, 5g

TF74: Bristol Manganese Glazed Ware, late 17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> century. 2 sherds, 10g.

TF80: Ashton Keynes-type Earthenware, 17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> century. 9 sherds, 119g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabric types is very typical of sites in the region, and suggests that most, if not all the activity at the site dates to the post-medieval period.

The sherds of Minety-type Ware and Cistercian Ware could be of medieval date, but such pottery was still in use in the post-medieval period. Similar comments apply to the Oxidized Glazed Malvernian Ware, but almost all that assemblage comprises fragments of internally-glazed bowls along with a few jar sherds, mostly in a fine, largely inclusion-free fabric. This is very typical of the late 16<sup>th</sup> - earlier 17<sup>th</sup> century output of the industry (Vince 1977, 288).

#### *Tile and brick*

Context 101 produced an extremely damaged piece of modern brick weighing 40g, with fragments of roof tiles occurring in two contexts, 301 and 501. The former produced a single fragment weighing 67g. It is a flat tile, and is 12mm thick. The latter produced two fragments, one from a ridge-tile (weight = 109g) and the other from a flat tile (weight = 23g). Both have a few small splashes of green glaze on the upper surface, and both are 13mm thick. They are all Malvernian type, a common type in the region. Ridge tiles of this type are largely of 16<sup>th</sup> century date, while the flat tiles were mainly used in the late 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century (Vince 1977, 274-5).

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Cntxt	TF44		TF52		TF60		TF68		TF62		TF80		TF74		TF61		TF67		TF71		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
101											6	92	1	7							L17thC
201			2	91																	L16thC
301			1	40																	L16thC
303	1	14	4	84					2	5			1	3	1	5	1	19			E18thC
401	1	6	11	163							3	27							1	5	MOD
403			6	85	1	32															L16thC
501			5	61			1	8													L16thC
Total	2	20	29	524	1	32	1	8	2	5	9	119	2	10	1	5	1	19	1	5	

### *Animal bone*

The animal bone assemblage comprised a total of 63 fragments weighing 900g. Four of the contexts producing bone (101, 301, 401 & 501) were residual in nature. Contexts 303 & 403 (post-medieval ditch fills) also produced small quantities of animal bone.

### *Environmental data*

None of the deposits exposed during the excavation proved suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling.

## DISCUSSION

The results of the field evaluation represent the third stage of a process of investigation carried out on the study site between 2017. The archaeological and historical analysis of the site began with an historic environment desk based assessment (Atherton & Cook, 2017) which concluded that ridge and furrow features (agricultural earthworks) tentatively identified from aerial photographs could not be established at ground level, and that a linear earthwork, also identified from the same source, was in fact natural terracing, a common feature along the southern edge of the Cotswold scarp.

The documentary assessment was followed by a geophysical survey (Davies, 2017) which provided evidence for potential archaeological features across the site and formed the basis of a subsequent trenching strategy ultimately physically testing these earlier findings and which was itself was the culmination of research at the study site.

Linear anomalies recorded during the geophysical survey and interpreted as ridge and furrow could not be verified either visibly at ground level nor by the trial trenching. The trenches, particularly 1-4, were deliberately located to transect the potential furrow fills which would be expected to survive as truncated darker linear in-filled features cut at regular intervals within the surface of the lighter natural clay. By the end of the excavation there was no indication of these features that could be identified in any of the trenches.

A segment of ditch (304 & 404) was recorded in both trenches 3 & 4, but its alignment did not correspond with the feature slightly further south identified by the geophysical survey crossing the central, southern half of the site on a similar north-east to south-west alignment. The magnetometer reading may have been recording the line of a former hedge rather than a ditch cut. responding to the magnetometer survey which was recorded situated slightly further south. in each of the trenches. The ditch itself could be represented by one of the linear anomalies interpreted as furrows in the survey.

Interestingly the alignments of ditch cuts 304 and 404 corresponds with a field boundary shown on the 1842 Tithe map which also is parallel with the existing southern site boundary. The ceramic evidence from the ditch indicates that it was probably constructed during the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Residual pottery sherds ranging in date from the medieval to modern periods were also recovered from the relict subsoil layers in all five trenches. These deposits may be associated with manuring of the site.

The linear 'earthwork' investigated by trench 5 was confirmed as natural terracing on two levels. An accumulation of relict subsoil (501) at the breaks of slope along the edges of the terracing indicates soil creep along the downward slope, a result perhaps of prolonged natural erosion rather than human cultivation.

A modern service pipe observed at the west end of trench 5 appears to correspond with a single linear anomaly identified in the geophysical survey crossing the site almost north-south, although it was not observed in trench 3.

### *Summary of results*

The evaluation confirmed the conclusions of the earlier desk based assessment that the earthwork straddling the western edge of the site is natural terracing characteristic of the geology on the Cotswold Edge. Ridge and furrow features identified from aerial photographs and recently interpreted from the results of a geophysical survey used in the trenching strategy, were not observed during the excavation. Instead a ditch of probable early 18<sup>th</sup> century date was recorded on the line of a boundary mapped in 1842; this represented the only archaeological feature recorded within the study site.

### *Significance*

The evaluation established that the earthwork identified along the western edge of the study site is not a significant archaeological feature, but instead natural terracing characteristic of the Cotswold Edge. The value of its setting is therefore not an issue.

A series of linear features interpreted as ridge and furrow (agricultural earthworks) from the geophysical survey could not be identified during excavation suggesting that they are related to variations in the underlying geology.

The earliest evidence of archaeological activity within the site is the construction of a post-medieval boundary ditch of probable early 18<sup>th</sup> century date. The alignment of this coincides with a field boundary shown on the 1842 Tithe map.

### *Impact of development*

The results of the trial trenching suggest that the development will have no impact. Archaeological deposits comprise a single ditch feature of post-medieval date. There was no evidence of ridge and furrow and the linear earthwork recorded on the HER was confirmed as natural in origin.

#### *Archive Location*

The digital archive arising from the work will be deposited with OASIS at the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). It is intended that the physical archive will be deposited with the Stroud Museum Service.

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## APPENDIX 1 OASIS

Project name	Land south of Chipping Surgery, Symn Lane, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire; archaeological evaluation
Project dates	Start: 30-05-2017 End: 02-06-2017
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	WUE17 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Monument type	DITCH Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	Pre-application
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: 96.62m Max: 99.53m
Name of Organisation	one ten archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project director/manager	sean cook
Project supervisor	sean cook
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Physical Archive recipient	county museum
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	OASIS
Paper Archive recipient	county museum
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land south of Chipping Surgery, Symn Lane, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire; archaeological evaluation

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Date	2017
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Place of issue or publication	Warks.
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