

WOLDS END CAR PARK SITE
CHIPPING CAMPDEN, GLOUCESTERSHIRE
TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY

This report has been researched and compiled with all reasonable skill and attention to detail within the terms of the project as specified by the client and within the general terms and conditions of Cotswold Archaeological Trust Ltd. The Trust shall not be liable for any inaccuracy error or omission in the report or other documents produced as part of the Consultancy and no liability is accepted for any claim loss or damage howsoever arising from any opinion stated or conclusion or other material contained in this report or other documents supplied as part of this Consultancy.

This report is confidential to the client. Cotswold Archaeological Trust Ltd accept no responsibility whatsoever to third parties to whom this report, or any part of it is made known. Any such party relies upon this report entirely at their own risk.

March 1994

1 INTRODUCTION

1. 1 Introduction

1. 1. 1 This report presents the results of a topographical survey conducted by Cotswold Archaeological Trust at Wolds End Car Park Site, Chipping Campden (NGR: SP 152 396). The work was commissioned by Cotswold District Council which, together with Chipping Campden Town Council, was exploring the possibility of using part of the site as car parking. The site is presently used as a paddock, although it was formerly an orchard, most of the trees of which still survive.

1.1.2 The survey was prompted by the presence of upstanding archaeological features on the site, most visibly in the form of ridge and furrow cultivation strips, although a variety of other earthwork features could also be seen. The aim of the survey was to ensure that the archaeological constraints and opportunities were fully explored. A programme of work was prepared by Mr. M. Watt, Landscape & Forestry Officer, Cotswold District Council. The survey was carried out from 21st - 23rd March 1994.

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 A full topographical survey of the site was made using a Sokkia Set 5 total station. All significant earthworks were recorded, including three profiles and spot-heights. Data presentation is in the form of a 1:500 scale plan (Fig 2). This illustrates the layout of the ridge and furrow by means of pecked lines (indicating the centres of the furrows). Other earthworks are conventionally illustrated by hachuring. For ease of cross reference to the text, all relevant features are labelled by letter code. The positions of three profiles across the earthworks are denoted on the plan by Roman numerals. Spot heights in metres above Ordnance Datum are shown across the site at selected points. The position of all fruit trees are shown and numbered 1-60, some of these only remain as stumps although all are included for completeness.

2 RESULTS

2.1 The most significant earthworks recorded within the study area comprised substantial ridge and furrow, with individual selions (a ridge defined either side by furrows) approximately 0.60m in height and up to 11.00m in width. It is not possible to closely date such features on morphology

alone as this method of open field farming was employed from the eleventh century to the series of Enclosure Acts between 1720-1840. However, the form of ridge and furrow seen within and around the study area falls within the category known as 'broad rig' generally accepted as having origins in the medieval period. It was evident that the ridge and furrow represented the earliest visible activity apparent within the site.

2.2 The ridge and furrow was broadly aligned south-east to north-west, typically running up and down slope to ensure good drainage. The soils of the study area are of a heavy clay so this would have been of great importance. On the south-east side of the study area it was evident that the ridge and furrow came to a decisive end, although there was no indication of a headland where the plough-team would have turned to resume its passage uphill.

2.3 Selions A-D (Fig 2) possessed a slight sweep towards the west and continued out of study area as part of the more extensive field system still extant under pasture to the west and north of the site. These seem to represent a separate phase of ploughing as selions E-I remain on a rigid north-west alignment. 'There was no indication of selions E-I surviving in the adjacent field to the north of the study area. It is probable that this was levelled out when the area was used as a coal yard.'

2.4 A shallow ditch and associated bank, J (Fig 2), was recorded along the northern boundary of the site. This evidently post-dated the ridge and furrow and appeared to be related to the existing hedge-line, which stops and possibly begins to turn, at the same point as the ditch and bank ends. It would seem likely that this is an old field boundary possibly associated with creation of the orchard.

2.5 A substantial linear earthwork was present along the eastern boundary of the site, creating a "hollow-way" type feature, K (Fig 2). Again it was evident that this post-dated the ridge and furrow and is probably associated with the quarry activity identified within the area, representing an access route. Toward the north-east the feature broadened out and became much shallower, possibly the result of an infilled quarry. The southern boundary of the site was pitted by quarrying and a roadside ditch. Quarrying, L and M (Fig 2), was most probably for the retrieval of the high quality limestone that characterises the area.

2.6 The process of quarrying in these areas had resulted in slight truncation of selions D and E, the irregularity of the terminals of these features also being enhanced by dumping of spoil from the quarry pits.

3 CONCLUSIONS

3.1 The topographical survey did not reveal any features pre-dating the open field cultivation. Study of early cartographic information would be likely to yield data on the land-use history of the study area and could identify datable phases of activity. However, given the generally mundane nature of post-cultivation activity in the study area such an exercise is unlikely to be of great value. The extant ridge and furrow earthworks therefore remain the most significant feature of the site, both archaeologically and visually.

3.2 Although the recorded ridge and furrow was relatively substantial and therefore visually impressive, this alone does not qualify it as nationally important. Such agricultural practice was widespread in the medieval and post-medieval periods, and the results are still visible in many areas, particularly the Midlands, despite modern farming techniques. More complete field systems exist in other parts of the country, and perhaps more importantly some of these are complemented by contemporary documentation which enhances their value (e.g. some Cambridge colleges).

3.3 In purely local terms the value of the site may be regarded as moderate. Although it is in private ownership and not a readily accessible community resource, the earthworks can nonetheless be viewed from outside the site and lend themselves to a visual appreciation of the medieval and later agricultural activity surrounding the settlement of Chipping Campden, coming as they do so close to the built-up environment. This view however is not readily appreciable from all around the site, and in fairness is best afforded to those on elevated ground. Loss of the earthworks to car parking may therefore be more significant to relatively small numbers of residents living adjacent to the site than the public in general.

3.4 The area to the north of the site has already been developed and parts of the field system levelled, therefore the integrity of the field system has been devalued. This weakens the case for preservation of the earthworks within the study area.

3.5 Although it is regrettable that any archaeological features need to be destroyed the loss of earthwork features in this paddock may to some extent be offset by presentation and interpretation to the general public of the remaining extant earthworks around the site. It is suggested that the stress of any presentation package should be on landscape history i.e. explanation of the former agricultural pattern, subsequent reorganisation after enclosure whereby new tracks and hedgelines cross the old pattern of ploughing and finally illustrating a shift from arable farming to use as an orchard and ready source of building materials.

3.6 As previously noted, selions A-D can be traced both within the study area and in the adjacent field to the north-west, although bisected by a farm track. Retention of selions A-D whilst the remainder of the site is given over to parking may allow a more immediate form of interpretation than would be afforded if visitors were solely required to gaze at a distance towards the ridge and furrow beyond the site. It is suggested that if possible these selions, or a portion thereof, are retained as a visual aid to interpretation, drawing the eye across the site and up the hillside to view the wider perspective.

3.7 Sensitive presentation of this sort may widen the visual accessibility of the remaining earthworks as opposed to the presently restricted views afforded to limited numbers.

4 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Rackham O. ,1986. The History of the Countryside

Taylor C. ,1975, Fields in the English Landscape

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Cotswold Archaeological Trust gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the following during the course of this project:

Malcolm Watt, Landscape and Forestry Officer, Cotswold District Council.

WOLDS END CAR PARK SITE,
CHIPPING CAMPDEN,
GLOUCESTERSHIRE
Profiles of topographical features

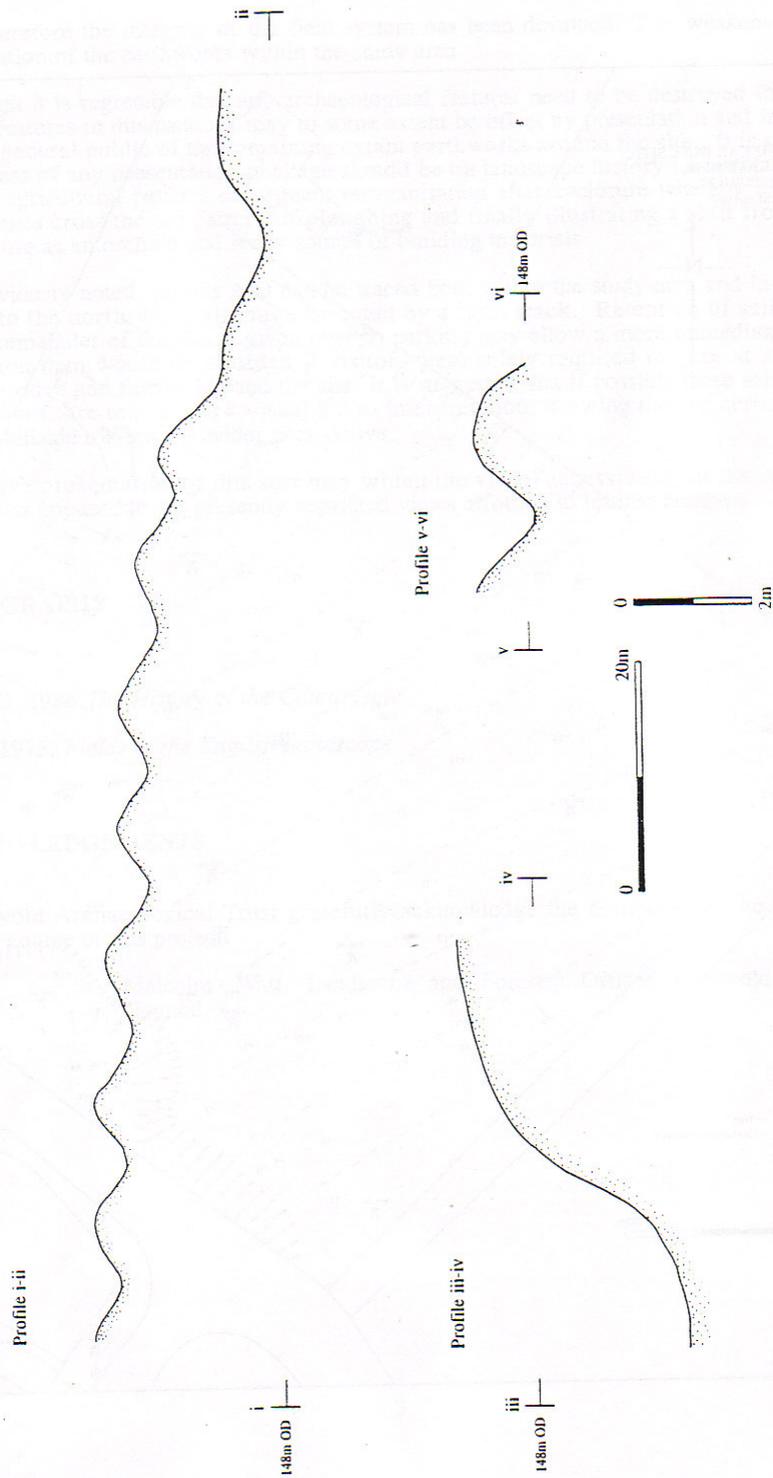


FIG 3