LAND AT WISTLEY HILL
COBERLEY
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

For
THE ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION PARTNERSHIP
(EDP)

on behalf of

TOTI GIFFORD ESQ

CA PROJECT: 2791
CA REPORT: 09021

JANUARY 2009
LAND AT WISTLEY HILL
COBERLEY
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

CA PROJECT: 2791
CA REPORT: 09021

prepared by
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date
28 January 2009

checked by
Simon Cox, Head of Fieldwork

date

approved by
Mark Collard, Head of Contracts

signed


date
9 February 2009

issue
01
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SUMMARY

Project Name: Land at Wistley Hill
Location: Coberley, Gloucestershire
NGR: SO 9825 1835
Type: Watching Brief
Date: 20 January 2009
Planning Reference: 08/03094/FUL
Location of Archive: To be deposited with Corinium Museum
Site Code: WIS 09

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the construction of an access track leading from the A436 to new agricultural barns and feed silos on land at Wistley Hill, Coberley, Gloucestershire.

The watching brief identified an undated ditch cutting the subsoil, orientated southwest/northeast. This was probably associated with a trackway on a similar alignment within Wistley Plantation, a tract of coniferous woodland established in the late 19th century, which was first depicted on the 1902 Second Edition Ordnance Survey 25” map. No artefactual material was recovered.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In January 2009, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for The Environmental Dimension Partnership (EDP), on behalf of Toti Gifford Esq at Wistley Hill, Coberley, Gloucestershire (centred on NGR: SO 9825 2179; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to a planning consent for the erection of a Cattle Shed and two off-feed silos, with provision of a hard surface access track from the A436 (Planning ref: 08/03094/FUL). The objective of the watching brief was to record all archaeological remains exposed during the excavation for the hard surface access track.

1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief (EDP 2009) prepared by EDP, with a subsequent detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA. Both documents were approved by Cotswold District Council (CDC) acting on the advice of Charles Parry, Senior Archaeological Officer, Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), the archaeological advisor to CDC. The fieldwork also followed the Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (2001), Statement of Standards and Practices Appropriate for Archaeological Fieldwork in Gloucestershire (GCC 1995) and the Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage 1991).

The site

1.3 The site is located within a field at the top of Wistley Hill, bordered to the south by the A436, and is surrounded on all other sides by farmland and mixed woodland (Fig. 2). The site lies at approximately 280m AOD. Land within the field falls quite sharply downwards from south west to north east, with a rather less marked drop to the north.

1.4 The site covers an area of 0.28ha and is currently open, semi-improved grassland, now grazed by a small herd of young cattle. There are recently dismantled farm structures and one existing Dutch barn, situated on the lower lying ground.

1.5 The underlying drift geology of the area is mapped as Inferior Oolite of the middle Jurassic era (BGS 1962).
Archaeological background

1.6 The archaeological and historical context to the site area has previously been set out in a desk-based assessment, which was prepared by EDP in December 2008 (EDP 2008), and to which reference should be made for greater detail. In summary, the site is located within the boundary of an area recorded on the Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) as a possible Iron Age hillfort. Examination of historic maps and aerial photographs, as well as the completion of a site walkover survey, suggested a linear earthwork believed to be a rampart may instead derive from post-medieval (probably 19th-century) stone quarrying. However, the assessment also attested previously recorded evidence for prehistoric and Roman activity in the area surrounding the site. The former included a pit, containing Neolithic pottery, west of the site at Vineyards Farm, whilst Iron Age finds were also located close by.

1.7 A reference in W.L. Cox’s “Prehistoric and Roman Sites of the Cheltenham Area”, records double entrenchments running parallel to the A436 on Wistley Hill. Cox also adds that “…on top of the hill is a flat platform, which may be associated with these earthworks”. The Gloucester and District Archaeological Research Group also holds a record for the apparent location of interments, which were found on Wistley Hill near the road to “Cubberley”, two fields west of the site boundary.

1.8 The A436, approximately 500 metres east of the site boundary, is believed to follow the course of a former Roman road, known as “Portstræt”. This was a relatively minor thoroughfare, which is recorded in an Anglo-Saxon charter. In “Saxon Charters and Field Names of Gloucestershire”, G.B. Grundy noted that the Portstræt was part of the Stow-on-the-Wold to Gloucester Road and followed the Cotswold Ridgeway. However, the Gloucestershire SMR notes that “…the precise course of this road is not certain, so it has been digitised only very tentatively”.

Methodology

1.9 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2009). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks, comprising the excavation of an access track, which runs north from the A436 and then turns east to service the platform for the agricultural barns and feed silos (Fig. 2).
1.10 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).

1.11 The archive from the watching brief is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. This will be deposited with Corinuim Museum. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

2. **RESULTS (FIGS 2 & 3)**

2.1 The natural geological substrate 104, consisting of a limestone brash, was revealed at an average depth of 0.28m below present ground level. This was overlain by a subsoil averaging 0.1m in thickness, which was in turn sealed by 0.18m of topsoil.

2.2 An undated ditch 104 was encountered within the northern part of the excavated track. It was orientated southwest/northeast, contained one fill 105, and cut the subsoil 102. The ditch was probably a drainage feature associated with a trackway on a similar alignment within the Wistley Plantation, which was first depicted on the 1902 Second Edition Ordnance Survey 25" map (see inset on Fig. 2).

2.3 No other features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks and, despite visual scanning of spoil, no artefactual material was recovered.

3. **DISCUSSION**

3.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the application area (see archaeological background above), the watching brief only identified a single undated ditch, probably associated with Wistley Plantation, within the area of observed groundworks. No other archaeological deposits were exposed within the excavated area. The presence of a surviving subsoil, albeit thin, may suggest that this is a result of a genuine absence of archaeological features in this area rather than truncation by the establishment of the 19th-century plantation or subsequent agricultural activity.
4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Sian Reynish. The report was written by Sian Reynish. The illustrations were prepared by Lorna Gray. The archive has been compiled by Sian Reynish, and prepared for deposition by Kathryn Price. The project was managed for CA by Simon Cox.

5. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 1962 *Geological survey of England and Wales: Cirencester. Sheet 235*

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2009 *Wistley Hill, Coberley, Gloucestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

EDP (The Environmental Dimension Partnership) 2008 *Land at Seven Springs, Coberley, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Assessment* EDP Ref H_EDP906_01b

EDP (The Environmental Dimension Partnership) 2009 *Land at Wistley Hill, Coberley, Gloucestershire: Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 1

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<th>No.</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<th>Width (m)</th>
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### APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

#### PROJECT DETAILS

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<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Land at Wistley Hill, Coberley, Gloucestershire</th>
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<td>Future work</td>
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#### PROJECT LOCATION

| Site Location | Wistley Hill, Coberley, Gloucestershire |
| Study area (M²/ha) | 0.28ha |
| Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference) | SO 9825 2179 |

#### PROJECT CREATORS

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Name of organisation</th>
<th>Cotswold Archaeology</th>
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<tr>
<td>Project Brief originator</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Design (WSI) originator</td>
<td>Cotswold Archaeology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>Simon Cox</td>
</tr>
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<td>Project Supervisor</td>
<td>Sian Reynish</td>
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#### PROJECT ARCHIVES

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<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Trench Sheets, Context sheets, Section drawing and plan.</td>
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</table>

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2009 Land at Wistley Hill, Coberley, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Watching Brief
The site, showing location of groundworks and archaeological features

- extract from an Historic Map of 1900, showing ditch 104 in relation to the trackway

Project: Wistley Hill, Coberley
Location: Gloucestershire

SCALEDRAWN BY PROJECT NO. FIGURE NO.

0 100m

existing tarmac track
area of barns and feed silos
ditch 104

Ward Bdy

COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

FIGURE TITLE

The site, showing location of groundworks and archaeological features

DRAWN BY: LG
SCALE: 1:1000@A4
PROJECT NO: 2791
FIGURE NO: 2

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