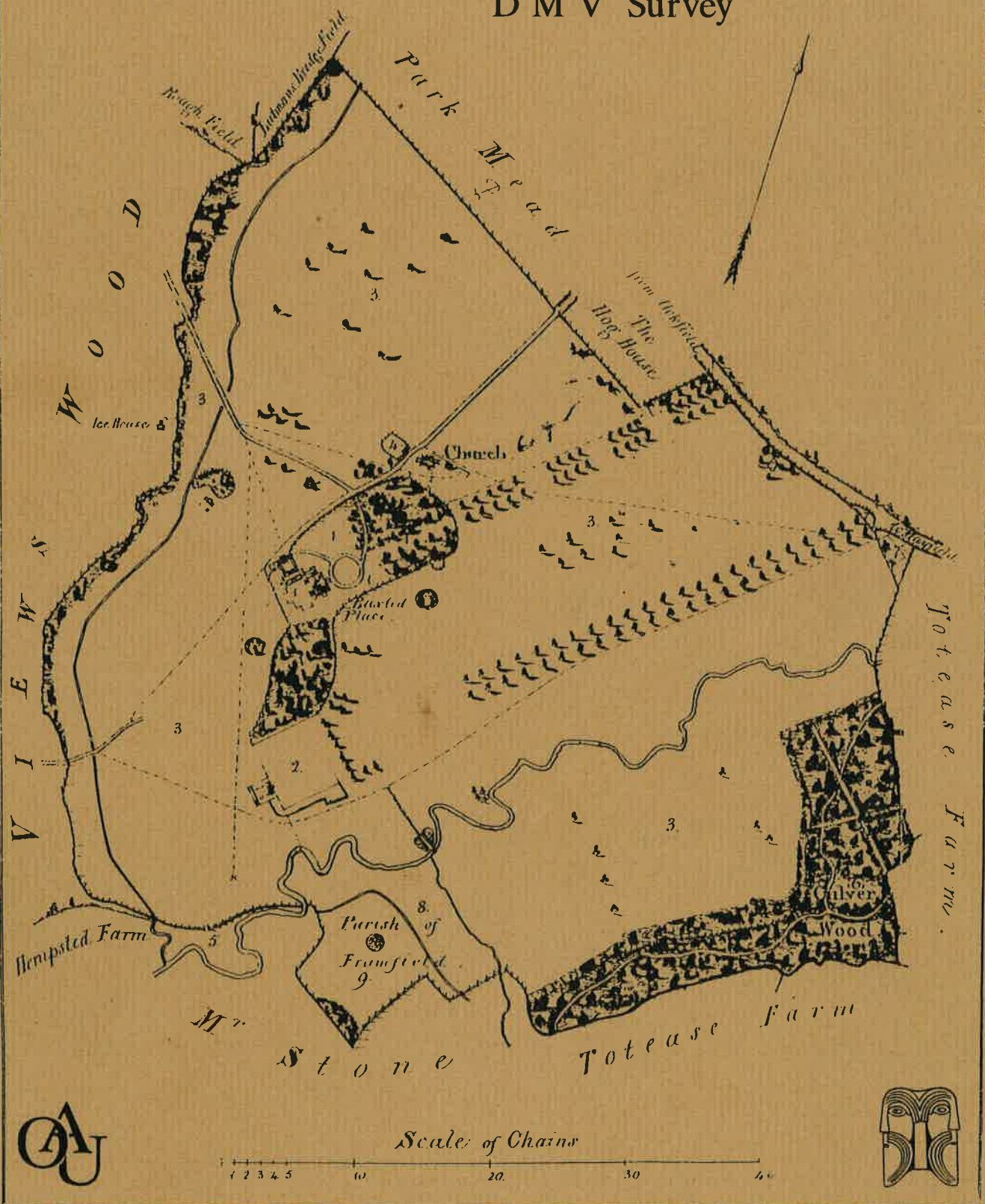


BUXTED PARK

DMV Survey



Oxford Archaeological Unit

BUXTED PARK, EAST SUSSEX
DESERTED MEDIEVAL VILLAGE EARTHWORK SURVEY
OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT [BXBP 90]

In September 1990 earthworks within the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Buxted DMV (East Sussex SAM No. 412) were surveyed and a plan produced at a scale of 1:1000. The survey was carried out for Chris Blandford Associates on behalf of E.E.T.P.U., and was confined to the area of the Scheduled Ancient Monument; its purpose was to define the area of existing earthworks in order to prepare a scheme for a golf course.

The earthworks are located both to the west and the north-east of the church. Immediately west of the church and along the drive the grass is closely mown; elsewhere it was relatively long and may obscure earthworks with very low relief. The easternmost part of the survey area was covered with thick bracken which obscures any earthworks that may exist there, while the westernmost end is in dense woodland.

The earthworks to the west of the church consist of a hollow way running down the slope away from the church. It is approximately 14 m. wide, 200 m. long and varies in depth between 1 m. and 50 cm. There are two humps c.20 cm. high located in the hollow way approximately 60 m. west of the road. There are also traces of a brick-built structure 50 m. along the hollow way. Traces of the hollow way appear further west, then as it descends a steep slope it turns to the south-west, becomes a bank (c.1 m. high), and terminates at the stream. There is an oval mound on the far bank of the stream, outside the scheduled area, which may be the remnants of a dam for a fishpond. Due to the vegetation (thick woodland) it was not possible to take exact levels in this area.

To the north-west of the church there is a low bank c.50 cm. high running east-west and a probable ditch c.30 cm. deep running north-west.

The earthworks east of the church consist of a possible hollow way running north-east; this is approximately 36 m. long, 8 m. wide, and 56 cm. deep. Some 40 m. further north-east is a bank c.1 m. high; this runs in a north-easterly direction and disappears into thick bracken after 190 m. It appears to be a plough lynchet, coinciding with the line of (and possibly enhanced by levelling for) the broad double avenue running from Buxted Place (see map). There are three platforms to the east of the bank and two to the west; these are all approximately the same size as each other (10 x 14 m.). They are flat, sharply defined and clearly terraced into the slope; one is roughly trapezoidal, the others rectangular with sharp corners. In four cases crescent-shaped mounds with slight hollows occur close to them. At the east end of the survey area close to the bracken two distinct platforms and a third less well defined one occur in a close cluster. These platforms do not obviously have the appearance of house platforms, being too regular, flat and sharply defined. Their apparent association with the crescent-shaped features (which are noticeably more regular and sharply defined than tree holes which are also visible) suggests that these platforms are in fact the remains of tees and for greens with bunkers for a small private golf course. We have been informed that

there was just such an amenity on this part of the site.

Although it is possible that slight traces of earthworks associated with the DMV were obscured by the length of the grass at the time of the survey, there is little indication of any substantial village remains on the surface. East of the church relatively regular undulations along the closely mown path beside the edge of the scheduled area may be the remains of ridge-and-furrow suggesting that this part of the monument may have been cultivated prior to the laying out of the park.

Further earthworks or other archaeological remains may occur beyond the limits of this survey; within the area of the survey there are likely to be buried remains, but these could only be defined by geophysical survey or by trenching. Evidence of the 18th-century estate map indicated that there were houses then standing on either side of the road running north from the church. Those east of the road will have been disturbed by the northward extension of the churchyard and by the levelling of the cricket ground, whilst those to the west of the road may survive in some form below ground. A local parishioner informed us at the time of the survey that pottery and other artifacts had been observed in disturbance caused by tree throws after the 1987 hurricane in the area west of the church.

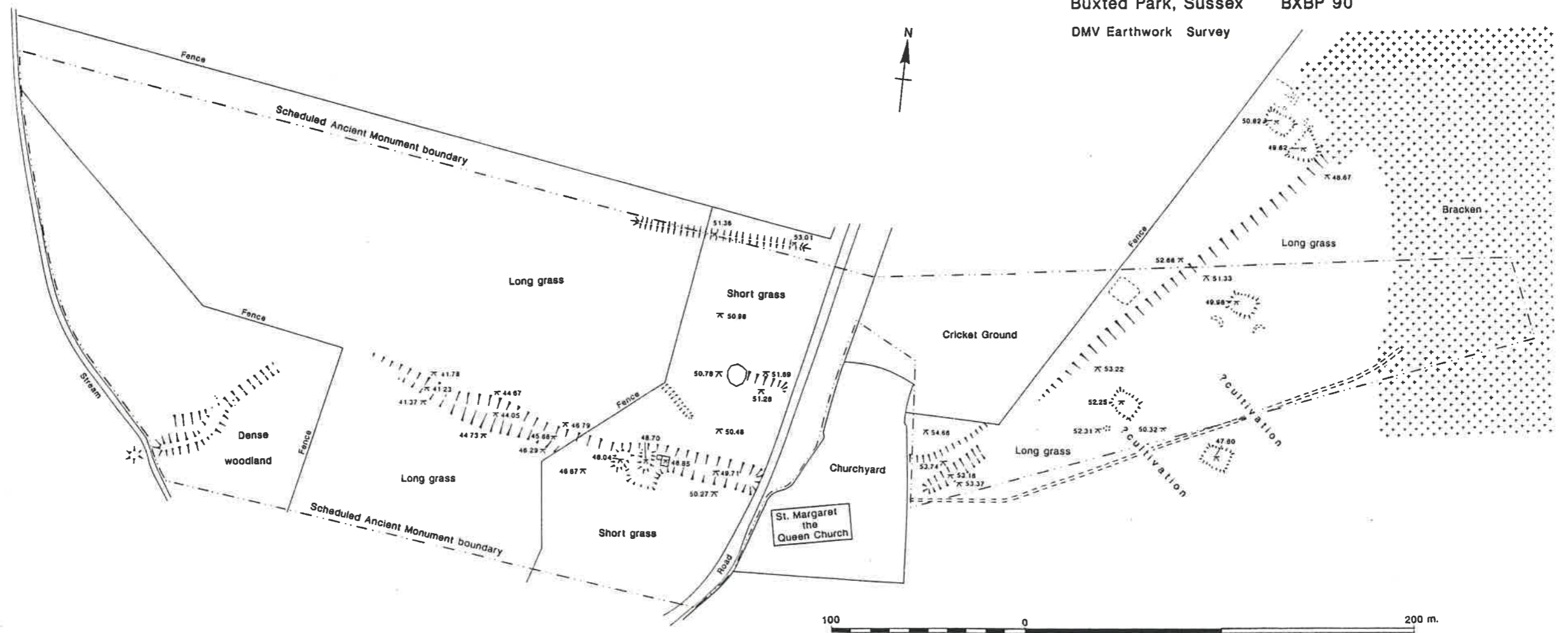
CONCLUSIONS

The golf course could be planned to avoid any serious impact on any subsoil features in the scheduled area by raising the ground level where needed without disturbing any of the ground surface. It is desirable to leave intact the lengths of hollow way as a visible feature. If disturbance of the ground surface were unavoidable, this would have to be preceded by geophysical survey and/or trial trenches or soil pits, requiring Scheduled Monument Consent, to establish whether there were subsoil remains of structures not visible on the surface.

In general the quality of earthworks is 'poor' for a DMV, or 'C' on the 5-point scale, A*, A, B, C, D, of Beresford & Hurst (1971, 64), and it may well be that the site was scheduled for its regional rarity. Whatever its sub-surface survival, the site does not therefore present a significant visual contribution to the landscape, but there should not in any case be any need for levelling the fairways, and the effect of any proposals should be minimal.

Oxford Archaeological Unit
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Buxted Park, Sussex BXPB 90
DMV Earthwork Survey





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