

Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB
Historic Landscape Characterisation Project

**HISTORIC LANDSCAPE TYPE
DESCRIPTION:**

TYPE 12 ARCHAEOLOGY



ENGLISH HERITAGE

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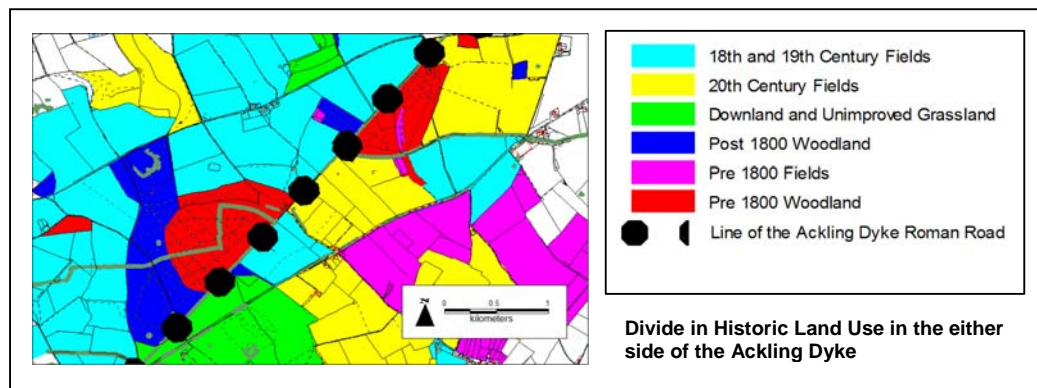
Archaeology and the HLC: An Introduction

“Still one cannot but experience a shock on seeing the plough driven through an ancient, smooth turf, curiously marked with barrows, lynchets, and other mysterious mounds and depressions, where sheep have been pastured for a thousand years without obscuring these chance hieroglyphs scored by men on the surface of the hills”

(From Hudson, W.H. (1987) *An Illustrated Shepherds Life*. Savitri Books Ltd. Pg 102)

The Historic Landscape Characterisation Project seeks to supplement and add to information already held on archaeological sites in the county based Sites and Monuments and Historic Environment Record. It does not, therefore, contain a record of every archaeological site in the AONB. Rather the Historic Landscape Characterisation is interested in the impact of archaeological features on the present day historic landscape character.

The AONB is blessed with a wealth of landscape scale archaeological features. These are relevant to the historic character of the AONB due to the affect that they have had on later land uses. Some such as Bokerly Dyke (a Saxon boundary with possible Bronze Age origins) or the Ackling Dyke (the line of a Roman Road) formed barriers across the landscape, which were respected long after they were abandoned for their original purpose. This can be seen the example below, where the history of land use remaining in the present day is markedly different to the north and south of the Ackling Dyke.



Others earthworks due to their scale affected the form of later land uses that were economic or practical. A key example is Iron Age Hillforts which are dotted across the AONB. These have distinctively shaped the patterns of fields and woodland that were imposed upon them. **It is these kinds of processes that are explored in more depth here.**

Hudson’s comment from the beginning of the 20th century demonstrates that many archaeological earthworks have been lost to the plough. However, their very presence affected and shaped the later historic character of the AONB. The area pictured, for example, was one of the last areas on the West Wiltshire Downs to be enclosed due to the intensity of prehistoric activity in this location.

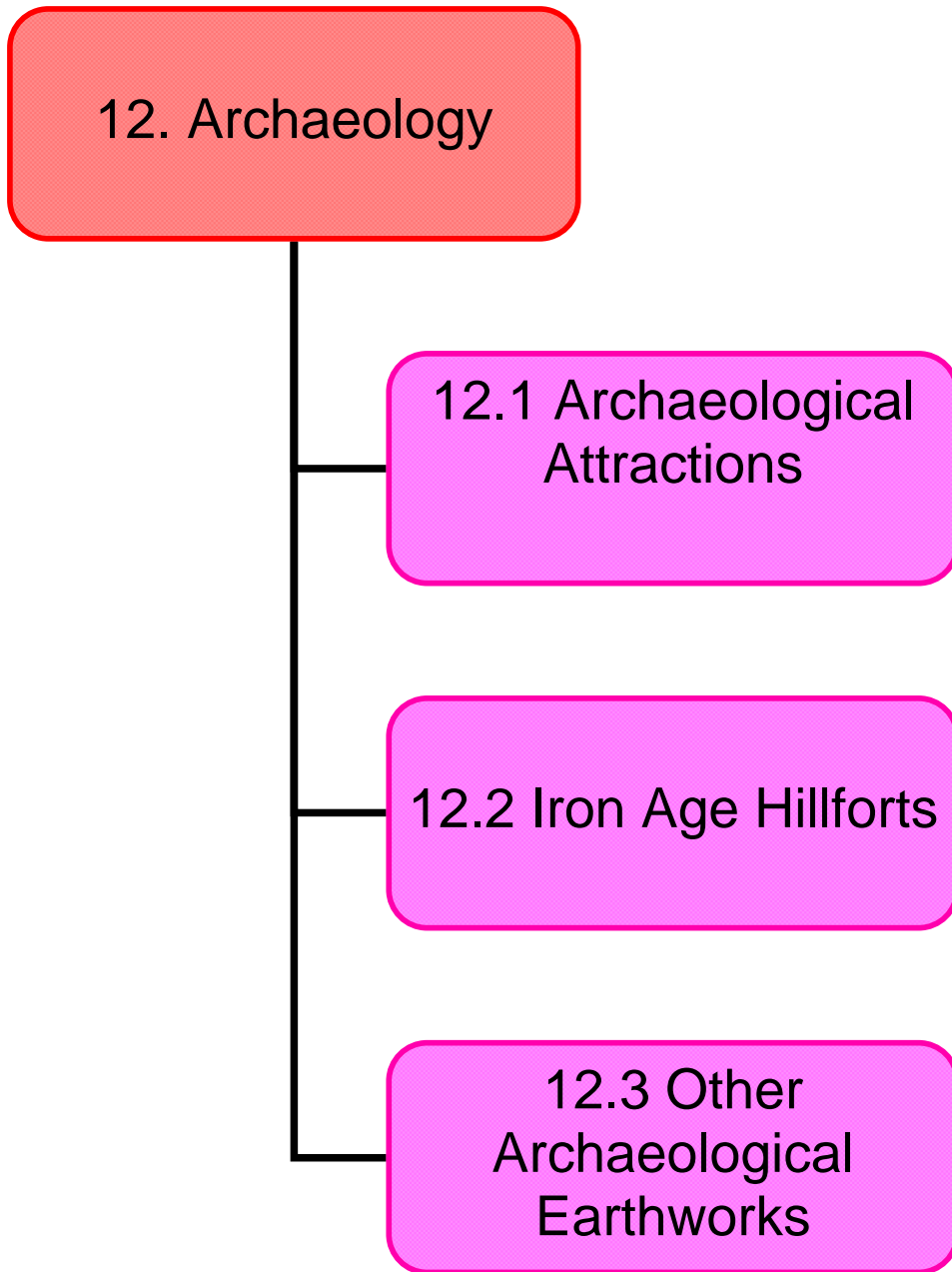


Archaeological features often, therefore, contributed to the late enclosure of an area.

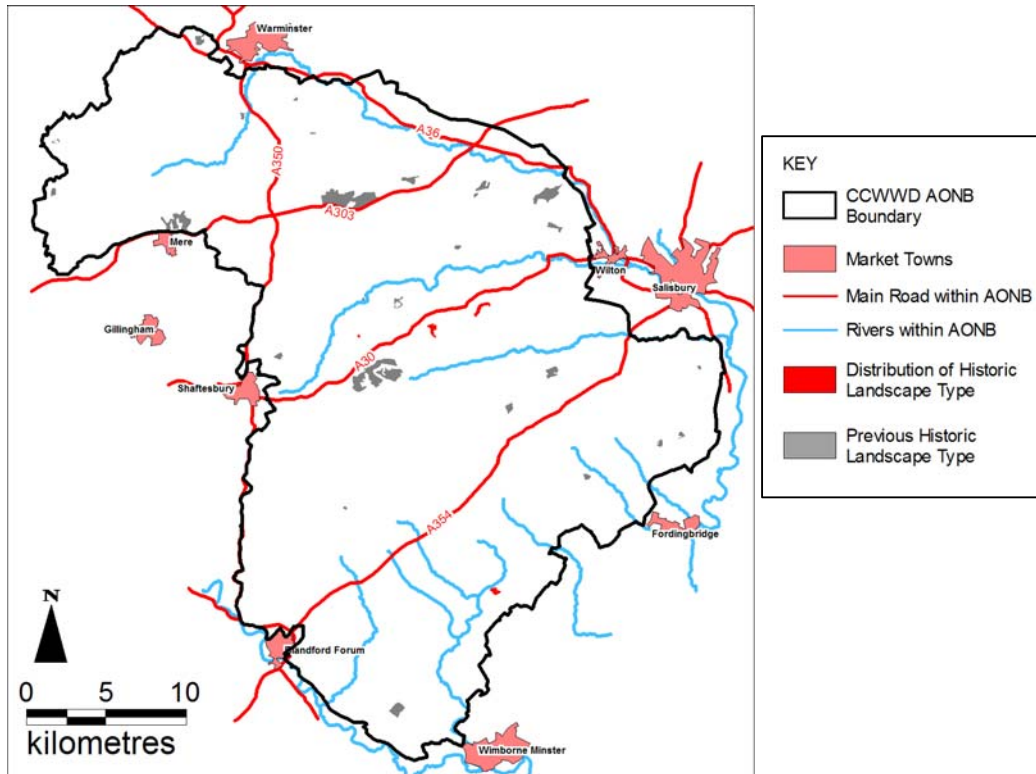
Conversely, some later historic lands uses have led to the survival of archaeological sites and monuments. For example, the late enclosure and ploughing of much of the open chalk grassland across the AONB means that across the Southern Chalk Downland Belt there is a strong correlation between the distribution of Round Barrows and areas in the HLC dataset which are recorded as having previously been open unenclosed downland.

Another key landscape scale archaeological influence on the landscape of the AONB is the fact that four county boundaries cross the AONB, those of Dorset, Hampshire, Somerset and Wiltshire. **These historic borderlands are a crucial feature in the AONB.** They once formed marginal land often subject to late enclosure, with the survival of common land and ancient woodland. This subject is currently being researched in more depth by The Dorset County Boundary Survey.

Finally some archaeological sites remain in the landscape of the AONB as focal points, which are visited and explored in their own right. Those sites which have been enhanced and modified to accommodate those visits, for example Rockbourne Roman Villa, exist as present day and current areas of land use in the Historic Landscape Characterisation map.



Type 12 Archaeology



Introduction

There is wealth of archaeology in the AONB, but describing this does not come under the scope of this project.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation is interested in archaeological sites for two reasons: -

1. Large scale archaeological sites or groups of features which have affected the morphology and land use history of later Historic Landscape Types.
2. Archaeological and historical sites which have been transformed into visitor attractions in the 20th Century.

Information relating to these two criteria has been recorded from both modern and historic Ordnance Survey maps. Sites which have been identified as contributing to current day Historic Landscape Types include Deserted Medieval Villages, ancient fields systems and Iron Age Hillforts.

This dataset, therefore, does not represent the location of archaeological sites in the AONB. This information can be accessed from the relevant county Sites and Monument Record or Historic Environment Record.

Distribution

Archaeological sites that contribute to current Historic Landscape Types have been recorded across the AONB, but with distinct concentrations being notable on the greensand terraces and the chalk downland.

Principal Historical Processes

Four archaeological sites in the AONB have been transformed into visitor attractions in the 20th century: Wardour Castle, Rockbourne Roman Villa, The Fovant Cap Badges, and Knowlton Church and Henge. These are identified as red on the distribution map, on page 380, as they still contribute to the current historic landscape character of the AONB.

Those areas coloured grey only exist as previous types as they have affected the later morphology and land use history of the present day historic landscape type recorded in this area. These areas tend to be associated with older historic landscape types, such as old woodland or open downland; in some instances their presence delayed the process of enclosure into the 20th century. In addition the distinctive form of Iron Age Hillforts created noticeable and distinguishing morphologies in the subsequent historic landscape types.

Typical Historical/Archaeological Components

This type is comprised of remnant earthworks or more commonly sites which exist only as cropmarks, where buried remains effect the growth of crops in fields.

The sites which now form visitor attractions are associated with dedicated infrastructure, such as specially created paths, car parks and visitor facilities.

Rarity

Archaeological earthworks are scarce in the HLC dataset, but represent a fraction of the sites recorded in the relevant county based HER/SMR.

Survival

The majority of these sites are now under plough, however, many of the Iron Age Hillforts survive as earthworks and there is a high proportion of extant earthworks associated with open downland, semi-open chalk escarpments, and old woodland.

Degree of surviving coherence of the historic landscape components

Many of the surviving examples of this type would be very recognisable, especially those which are kept as cultural attractions or those situated on open downland.



Past interaction with other types

The type is associated with the later historic landscape types whose morphology it has affected.

Evidence for time-depth

Many of the examples of this type represent some of the earliest evidence of human activity in the landscape.

Contribution to the present landscape character

Many of these archaeological sites form important focal points in the landscape.

Key Statistics

Total Area:	77.3 hectares, 0.11% of the AONB.
No. of Polygons:	This Subtype is comprised of 5 polygons, 0.11% of the total number of polygons digitised.
Av. Polygon Size:	Each polygon averages 15.46 hectares in size.
Occurrence:	Scarce.
Previous Coverage:	958.72 hectares, 0.97% of AONB was Archaeology at the point when this type was at its most prevalent.
Total Recorded Coverage:	The total recorded coverage of this type is 1152.95 hectares, 1.17% of the AONB.

Constituent Types

[12.1 Archaeological Attractions](#)

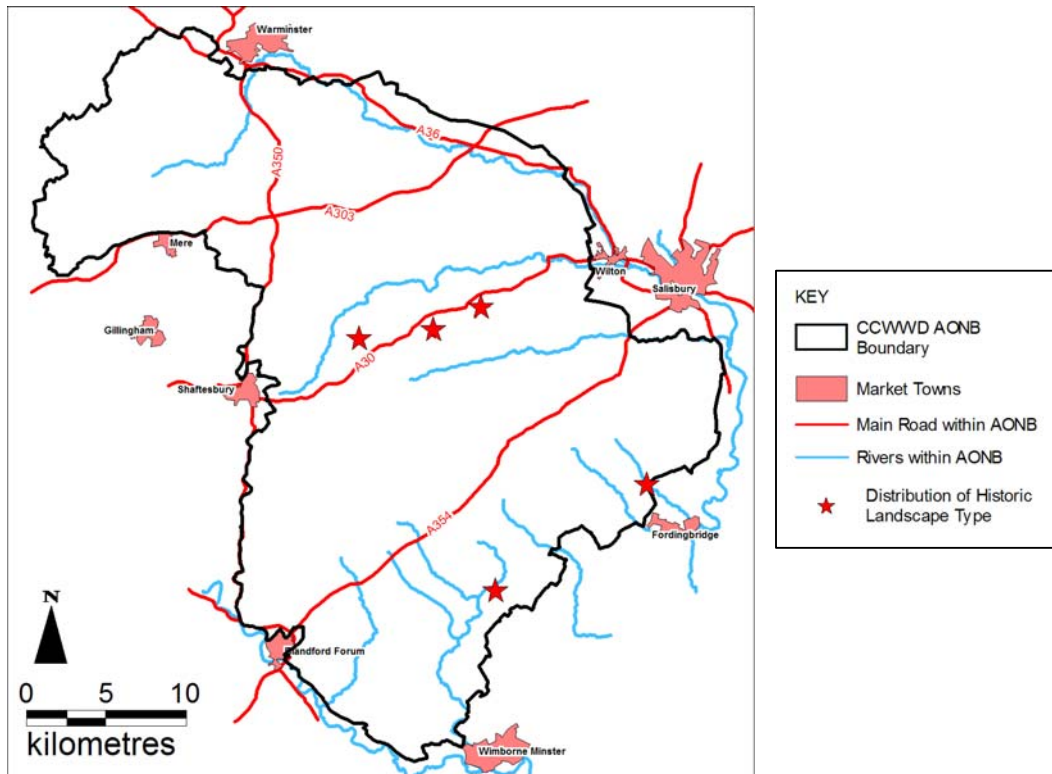
[12.2 Iron Age Hillforts](#)

[12.3 Other Archaeological Earthworks](#)

Parent Type

None

Type 12.1 Archaeological Attractions



Introduction

Four Archaeological and Historical features that are used in the modern day as cultural attractions and are visited by relatively large numbers of people. These are: -

- Chalk carvings known as the Fovant Cap Badges
- Medieval Wardour Castle
- Rockbourne Roman Villa
- Knowlton Church and Henge

These are in addition to historic houses, gardens and parks.

Distribution

The Fovant Cap Badges were created along the chalk escarpment to the south of the village of Fovant. Wardour Castle is in the Nadder Valley to the south of Tisbury, while Knowlton and Rockbourne Roman Villa are in the southeast of the AONB.

Principal Historical Processes

Two of the identified archaeological sites, Wardour Castle and Knowlton Church and Henge, are Scheduled Ancient Monuments which are managed as cultural attractions by English Heritage.

Old Wardour Castle was built in the late 14th century by John Lord Lovel. It was besieged and damaged in the English Civil War. During the 18th century the castle was incorporated into the landscaped grounds built by Lord Arundell.

Knowlton Church and Henge consist of a ruined Medieval church at the centre of a Neolithic Henge.

Rockborne Roman Villa is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument but is maintained by Hampshire County Council. The largest Roman Villa in the area, the site includes bath houses, living quarters, farm buildings and workshops.

The Fovant Cap Badges date to the 20th century. In the First World War Fovant was the site of a transit and training camp. Many of the regiments which were at some point stationed at Fovant carved replicas of their cap badges into the hills. At the end of the war twenty of these survived, but were allowed to grass over during the Second World War. Due to the voluntary efforts of the Fovant Badges Society eight of the military crests have recently been restored and these are still admired from the A30.

Typical Historical/ Archaeological Components

This type is comprised of archaeological earthworks and historic buildings managed as attractions. They are accompanied by gravel paths, fences, ancillary buildings and dedicated parking.



The Fovant Badges, in contrast, consist of symbols carved into the chalk, which have to be maintained to still be seen. The facilities accompanying them, include a viewing point at the side of the A30, are situated away from the badges themselves, as they can only be appreciated from a distance.

Rarity

Cultural attractions of this kind occur rarely in the AONB, but they should be counted alongside the historic parks and gardens which also attract large visitor numbers.

Survival

In the case of the Fovant Badges only eight of the original cap badges remain and these require annual maintenance to survive. Wardour Castle and Knowlton Henge are owned and managed by English Heritage, who has a duty to maintain them. Rockbourne Villa is maintained by Hampshire County Council.

Degree of surviving coherence of the historic landscape components

This type would be very recognisable in the landscape, however they are not as well known as other archaeological attractions in the region.

Past interaction with other types

Old Wardour Castle is associated with the 18th century landscaped park, which was designed around the ruin.

Evidence for time-depth

The Fovant Badges are intrinsically linked with the open chalk escarpment on which they were created and are a relatively recent phenomenon.

In contrast Knowlton Henge represents some of the oldest evidence of human activity in the landscape. This site, along with Wardour Castle and Rockborne Villa preserves a wealth of evidence of past human activity in the landscape.

Contribution to the present landscape character

Although these features cover a small area, they represent archaeological and historical features in the landscape of the AONB of national importance.

Key Statistics

Total Area:	77.3 hectares, 0.08% of the AONB.
No. of Polygons:	This Subtype is comprised of 5 polygons, 0.11% of the total number of polygons digitised.
Av. Polygon Size:	Each polygon averages 15.46 hectares in size.
Occurrence:	Rare.
Previous Coverage:	77.3 hectares, 0.08% of AONB was Archaeological Attractions at the point when this type was at its most prevalent .
Total Recorded Coverage:	The total recorded coverage of this type is 77.3 hectares, 0.08% of the AONB.

Constituent Types

None

Parent Type

[12. Archaeology](#)

Suggested Sources

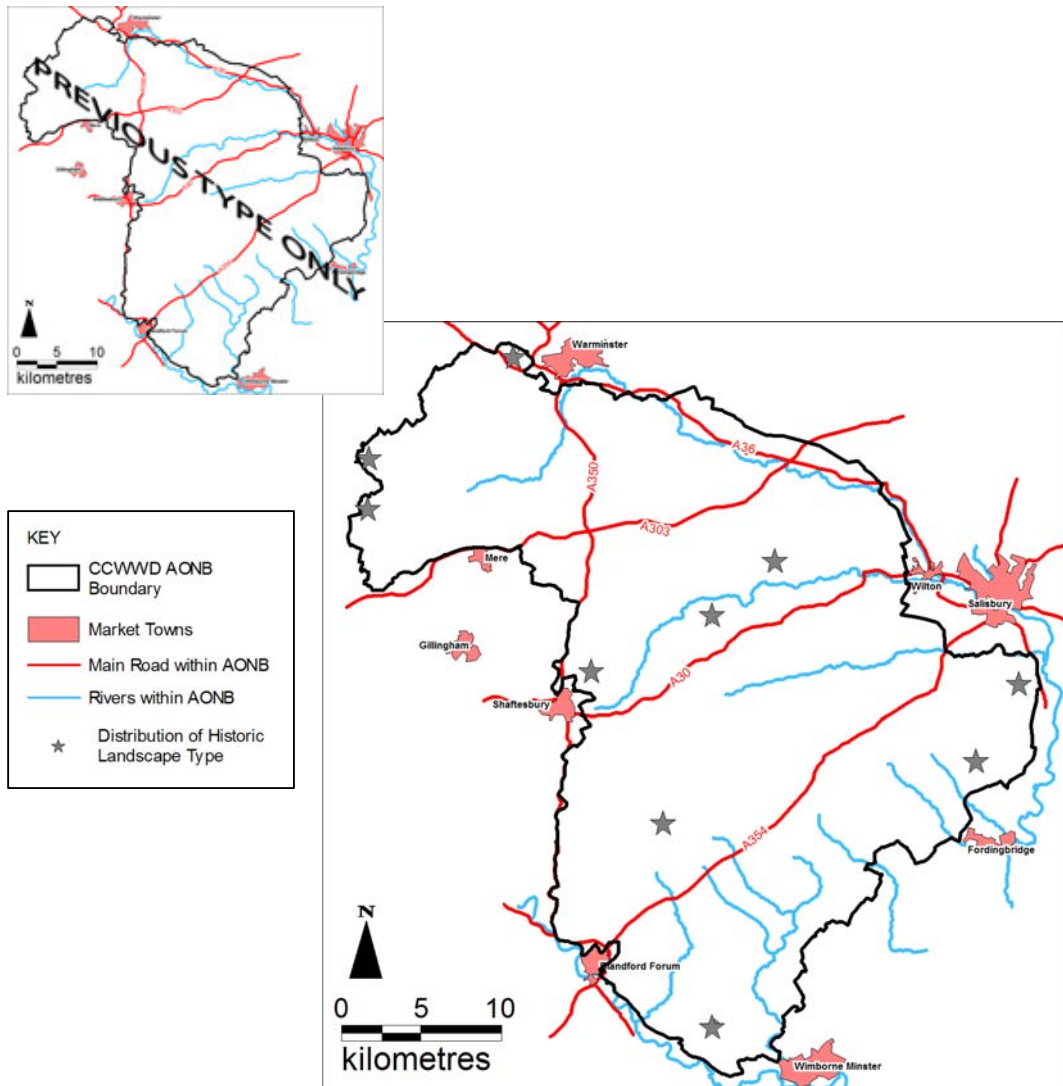
Fovant Cap Badges - <http://www.fovantbadges.com/howcan.htm>

Knowlton Henge and Old Wardour Castle – www.english-heritage.org.uk

Rockbourne Roman Villa - <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/rockbourne-roman-villa>

Websites last accessed 22nd May 2008

Type 12.2 Iron Age Hillforts



Introduction

Iron Age Hillforts whose morphology has directly affected later historic land use. This has been recorded from both modern and historic Ordnance Survey maps.

This dataset does not represent the location of all of the former known Iron Age Hillforts in the AONB, only those which have affected the current Historic Landscape Type present. This information can be accessed from the relevant County Sites and Monument Record or Historic Environment Record. The majority of these sites remain as extant earthworks.

Distribution

Iron Age Hillforts which have affected the morphology of later historic land use exist across the AONB. They do tend to be located on the greensand hills especially in the north west of the AONB.

Principal Historical Processes

The Hillforts themselves date to the Iron Age. In this project, however, their interest lies in how they have affected later land use. In the majority of cases the presence of the Hillforts has meant that older land uses have survived for much longer, due to the



difficulty of turning these earthworks into agricultural enclosed land. The Hillforts today are associated with old woodland, relic common land, areas of open downland, or downland that has only been enclosed or planted with new trees in the 20th century. The distinctive shape of the Hillforts has influenced the morphology of later land uses. This can clearly be seen in this example, where a circle of old woodland remains on the banks and ditches of the Hillfort, where as the flatter centre has been assarted into an enclosed field in the post medieval period.

Typical Historical/Archaeological Components

The remnants of the Hillforts tend to be located on higher ground and consist of concentric circular banks and ditches with a central flat area.

Rarity

Evidence for 19 hillforts have been recorded in the AONB in the relevant county archaeological record, 11 of these have been identified as affecting later historic landscape character.



Survival

The fact that the Hillforts consist of prominent large banks and ditches means that substantial evidence for these remain in the landscape.

Degree of surviving coherence of the historic landscape components

This type would be recognisable in the landscape, where they are present on the edge of chalk escarpments. However those obscured by trees would be less obvious.

Past interaction with other types

The type is associated with the later historic landscape types whose morphology it has affected.

Evidence for time-depth

The Iron Age Hillforts represent evidence for some of the earliest activity in the AONB.

Contribution to the present landscape character

Remnant Iron Age Hillforts cover a small area of the AONB, but represent some of the most obvious and accessible evidence of prehistoric activity present in the landscape. They are visible from a distance and overlook significant tracts of countryside, their impact is much wider than their visible area.

Key Statistics

Total Area:	N/A
No. of Polygons:	N/A
Av. Polygon Size:	N/A
Occurrence:	N/A
Previous Coverage:	151.39 hectares, 0.15 % of AONB was Iron Age Hillforts at the point when this type was at its most prevalent
Total Recorded Coverage:	The total recorded coverage of this type is 151.39 hectares, 0.15 % of the AONB

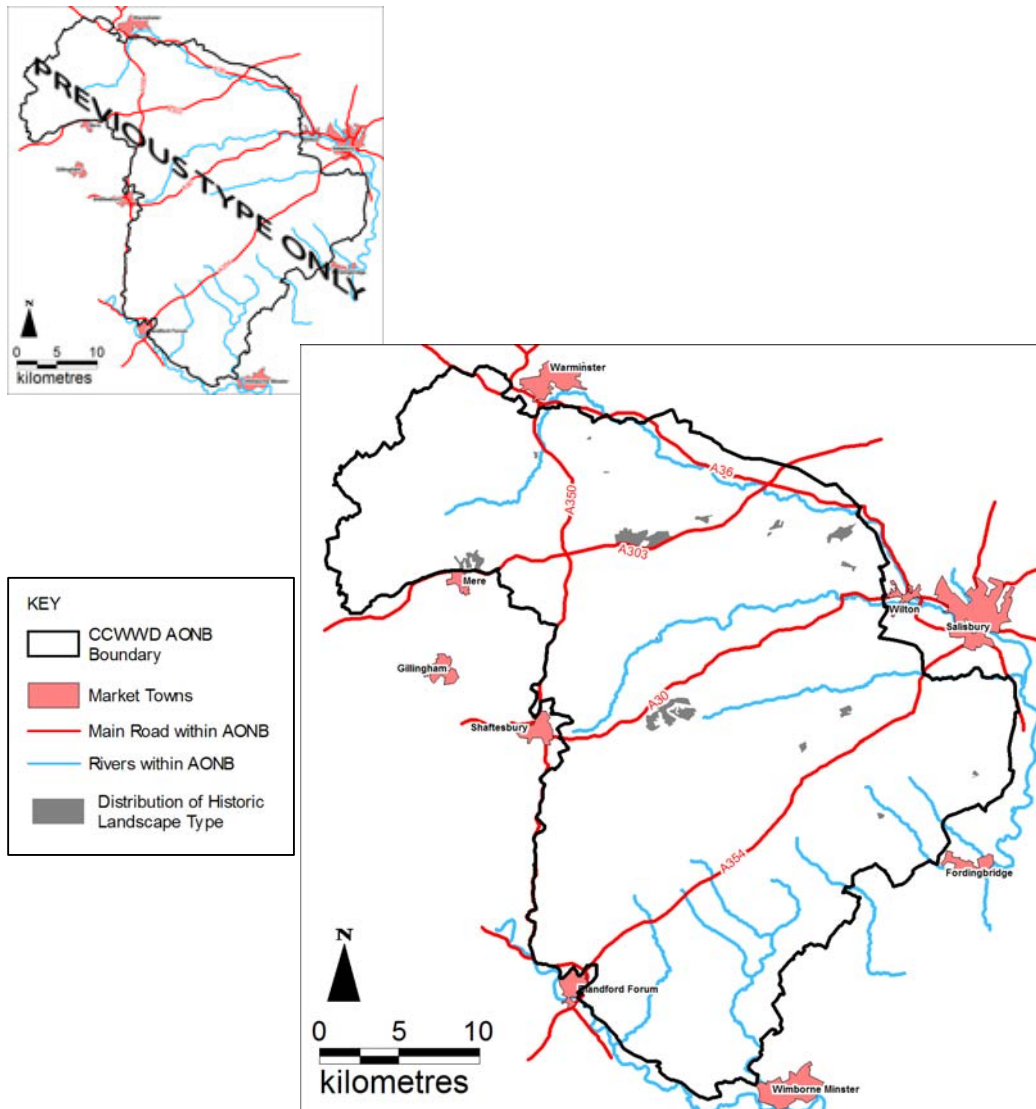
Constituent Types

None

Parent Type

[12. Archaeology](#)

Type 12.3 Other Archaeological Earthworks



Introduction

Archaeological earthworks whose morphology has directly affected later historic land use, excluding Iron Age Hillforts. This has been recorded from both modern and historic Ordnance Survey maps. This dataset does not represent the location of all of the former known Archaeological earthworks in the AONB. This information can be accessed from the relevant county Sites and Monument Record or Historic Environment Record. The majority of these sites are now extremely fragmentary or are under the plough.

Distribution

Archaeological earthworks which have affected the morphology of later historic land use exist across the North and East of the AONB. They tend to cluster on the chalk downland and chalk escarpments.

Principal Historical Processes

The archaeological earthworks, which have affected the morphology of present day landscape, can be split into four main categories:-

- Evidence of open medieval farming and medieval settlement
- Pre-medieval field systems
- Prehistoric enclosures
- Deserted medieval villages

In the majority of cases the presence of major blocks of earthworks has meant that older land uses have survived for much longer due to the difficulty of turning them into agricultural enclosed land. In many cases their presence has meant that the areas in which they exist represent some of the last areas of open chalk downland to be enclosed. In some areas this occurred in the 19th century, but large swathes were not enclosed until the second half of the 20th century. A few examples remain as older woodland which has not been assarted. There is a high occurrence of archaeological earthworks associated with the remaining open and unenclosed downland.

Typical Historical/ Archaeological Components

Many of the archaeological earthworks are now under plough, but they tend to consist of sub-circular enclosures, strip lynchets, ridge and furrow and small rectangular ancient field systems.



Rarity

Twenty three separate areas of earthworks have been recorded as influencing later historic land use, compared with the 4000 records in the county SMRs and HERs.

Survival

Unlike the Iron Age Hillforts, many of these earthworks are now under the plough, though many survived as extant earthworks into the 20th century.

Degree of surviving coherence of the historic landscape components

Many of the examples of this type would not be recognisable in the landscape, as they do not exist as obvious earthworks; there are exceptions to this rule, such as the surviving strip lynchets or in areas of open downland.

Past interaction with other types

The type is associated with the later historic landscape types whose morphology it has affected.

Evidence for time-depth

The archaeological earthworks represent evidence for some of the earliest activity in the AONB.

Contribution to the present landscape character

In some instances archaeological earthworks have made a significant contribution to the morphology and land use history of the modern landscape of the AONB.

Key Statistics

Total Area:	N/A
No. of Polygons:	N/A
Av. Polygon Size:	N/A
Occurrence:	N/A
Previous Coverage:	924.26 hectares, 0.94 % of AONB was Iron Age Hillforts at the point when this type was at its most prevalent.
Total Recorded Coverage:	The total recorded coverage of this type is 924.26 hectares, 0.94 % of the AONB.

Constituent Types

None

Parent Type

[12. Archaeology](#)