

PROJECT DESIGN FOR EXCAVATION AT PARHAM HOUSE MAY 2009

1 Introduction

This project design details the planned excavation Parham House during the Whitsun Bank Holiday in May 2009. Worthing Archaeological Society has been working at Parham House for two years, seeking to locate the position of the medieval village. Several trenches have previously been dug, but these have shown little sign of archaeology other than residual artefacts. Mr John Mills (President of WAS and West Sussex County Archaeologist) carried out an archive search and located a tracing of a map (the tracing was made in 1898, the map is thought to have drawn in 1848) showing the presence of a parcel of glebe land just to the east of the church (see Fig.1). A re-evaluation of the resistivity data (see Fig.2) shows the presence of a large anomaly which appears to lie in the area of glebe land. The resistivity also showed a curvi-linear anomaly leading from the modern road through the estate to the church. It is possible that the glebe land was occupied by the original parsonage and the curvi-linear feature represents the original path to the church. The excavation is designed to test these hypotheses.

In addition, the commercial arm of the Parham Estate has widely advertised this weekend as an opportunity for the public to see archaeologists at work. WAS will run a series of activities, which will guide visitors through the investigation process. This will take the form of a tour which starts with a consideration of artefacts previously recovered from the estate. It is hoped that some of these will be display. This would be followed by a brief talk on the discovery process and then a tour of the excavations taking place that weekend.

2 Site Location & Geology

The site at lies c35m above Ordnance Datum to the south of the main House and east of the Church, at grid reference SZ50601141. The area of the site is supposedly on the Arun Valley river terrace 5 deposits, however previous excavation on the site suggests that there are no river terrace deposits remaining and the geology below the soil is the Upper Greensand.

3 Archaeological Background – Excavations in 2007 and 2008

Excavations were carried out in 2007 and 2008 to try to locate the position of the medieval village. A total of 8 trenches were dug in 2008, only one of which revealed any significant archaeology. This was trench G, located in the eastern arm of the ha-ha, which showed the presence of a substantial wall. Unfortunately, this structure remains undated at present and requires further work. Archive research has failed, up to now, to reveal the location of the village. However, this is a long-term project designed to increase the understanding of the Parham Estate's evolution. Further extensive archival work (possibly accessing the archives at Kew and Canterbury) is required

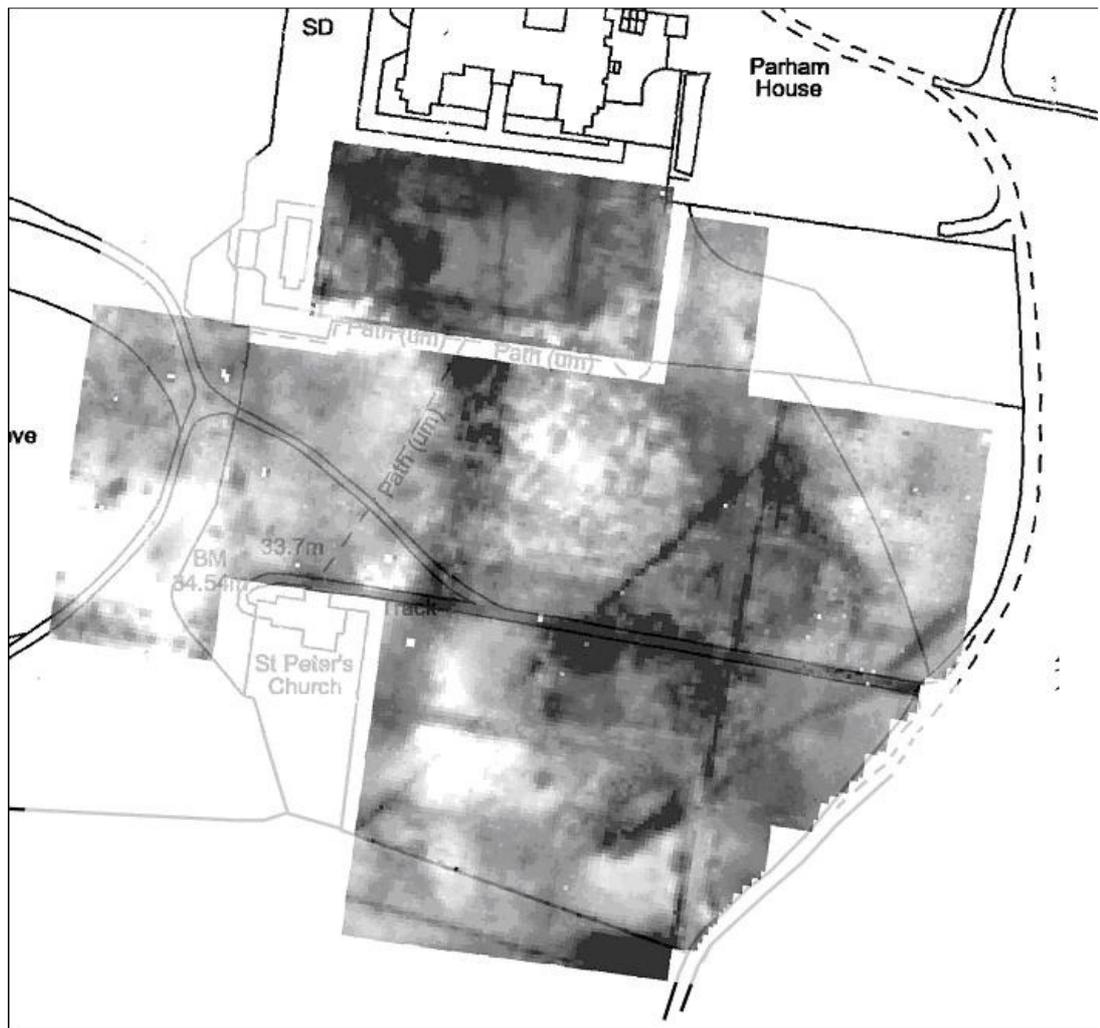


Fig.2. Resistivity results from 2008

4 Field Methodology for PAR09 Excavation

4.1 Objectives

Based on the findings from the previous excavation, the archive research and the Resistivity survey there are two main objectives for what this excavation.

1. Does the parcel of glebe land represent the position of the Parsonage, and if so, what remains of that structure?

2. Is the curvi-linear structure on the resistivity survey an earlier track to the church?

4.2 Excavation Approach

Four trenches will be opened in order to investigate the objectives listed above. The trenches will be hand dug, with the spoil placed in the area adjacent to each trench.

4.2.1 Trench F

This trench was originally opened in May 2008, but bad weather prevented its completion. An area of what appeared to be packed ironstone was observed. This coincides with the curvi-linear feature on the resistivity survey. Is this a made up track?

Trench J

This will be a 4 x 1.5 metre trench, located approximately 15 metres from the east of the Church on the line of the curvi-linear anomaly. It is located to test the track hypothesis.

Trench K

This will be a 4 x 1.5 trench, located approximately 5 metres west of the modern road on the line of the curvi-linear anomaly. It is located to test the track hypothesis.

Trench L

This will be a 6 x 3 metre trench positioned over the eastern proportion of the glebe land as defined by the anomaly on the resistivity survey. Spoil will be piled to the west in order to allow the trench to extend eastwards should the archaeology and time constraints allow.

4.2.2 Site Records

- Details of the nature, extent and date (where it is possible to determine) of archaeological contexts will be recorded upon the standard pro forma sheets that would be provided by WAS (as drawn up in conjunction with the County Archaeologist).
- Measured drawings (plans at 1:20, sections at 1:10) will be made as appropriate, with particular emphasis on sections. All drawings to be accurately related to the OS National Grid.
- Levels will be taken where appropriate; ensuring that each context recorded can be related to Ordnance Datum. A TBM will be established on site and linked into the nearest OS BM at the church at Walberton.
- Photographs will be taken using both a film camera and a digital camera as appropriate, using a suitable scale.
- Artefacts will be retained where considered appropriate in the light of their context and/or importance.
- All artefacts recovered during the excavation will be processed according to guidelines as set out in First Aid for Finds, 1998, and to the standards of Worthing Museum.
- All artefacts will be quantified by number and where appropriate weight.
- All artefacts, except those excluded on the grounds of size/material, will be washed and marked with the site code.
- All artefacts will be bagged and boxed in containers approved by the museum and sympathetic to their condition. Specialist help will be sought via the Sussex Archaeological Society where more detailed analysis and/or conservation is required.

4.2.3 Environmental Material

Environmental sampling will occur where appropriate. However, given the geology it is unlikely that much will be preserved.

4.2.4 Metal Detecting

Metal detectors will be used to scan the various spoil heaps to locate finds missed by the diggers. This has proved to be very successful in the past, increasing our recovery rate of coins by 100%. If possible, metal detectors will be used over the area of the trenches after machine digging but prior to hand excavation. Any 'hits' will be marked and left for recovery in the course of excavation.

5 Timetable

The excavation is planned for 3 days commencing on 23rd May 2009. WAS members will be on site from Thursday 21st May in order to facilitate a quick start on the Saturday

6 Post-Excavation Analysis

It is envisaged that where possible all artefacts will be identified and reported on by local specialists.

7 Written Report

1. An interim reports will be produced within three months of completion of the excavation. This report will be distributed to those mentioned below, and will posted on the WAS website. It will also be published in the WAS newsletter/journal.
2. A final report (detailing the excavations in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009) will be prepared, which will include details of the excavation method, a description of the archaeological features, details of artefacts and an assessment of environmental evidence. The report will also include site location, trench details and feature plans tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid and sections showing levels above Ordnance Datum.
3. Copies of the final report will be submitted to the following:
 - West Sussex County Council;
 - Parham Estate;
 - Sussex Archaeological Society.

8 Deposition of Archive and Finds

1. Artefacts remain in the ownership of the Parham Estate and will be stored, initially at the Slindon office. Where relevant some material will be kept off-site if conversation standards require it.
2. A copy of the site archive will be offered to the following:
 - West Sussex County Council;
 - Parham Estate
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9 Other

1. The trench(es), when unattended, will be secured and clearly marked in a manner commensurate with Health & Safety regulations. 'Deep Excavation notices will be used if appropriate.
2. A Risk Assessment will be carried out prior to the archaeological excavation and all relevant Health and Safety regulations will be complied with during the excavation. All members of the excavation team will be briefed on its contents before commencing work at the site. A first aid kit will be available on site at all times.
3. WAS are fully insured (as arranged through the Council for British Archaeology) to undertake all aspects of archaeological fieldwork
4. The initial excavation will be funded by the Worthing Archaeological Society. If dating or other scientific analysis is required, Sussex Archaeological Society will be approached for a Margary Grant.

Alternatively the CBA South East regional society will be approached for a grant.

5. Personnel. In addition to excavators, this project will require at least 6 people to handle the visitors. Two people will be required to man the find exhibition, two to deal with the discovery process, and two to conduct site tours. This latter includes visits to the Ice House and possibly dove cote.