

PROJECT DESIGN FOR EXCAVATION AT PARHAM HOUSE, October 2009

1 Introduction

This project design details the planned excavation Parham House from Friday 16th October to Monday 19th October. Worthing Archaeological Society excavated a series of trenches and test pits in May, July and August 2009. These revealed the presence of a chalk surface, thought to represent the yard of the parsonage demolished in the 1730s. They also allowed us to locate the southern boundary of the built area where it abuts the path to the churchyard. One trench (Trench Q) also showed a metre wide band of packed ironstone, which could be a wall foundation. These results backed up the evidence provided by the resistivity survey and from documentary sources. This excavation is designed to further investigate the southern boundary of the built area and to investigate the packed ironstone and two chalk surfaces that it separates.

2 Site Location & Geology

The site 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 longterm 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 before we can expect to locate the missing village. However, the location of the Parsonage is of interest to the current estate management, and documentary sources have suggested that it was to the east of the Church. The Parsonage appears to have consisted of a dwelling, a barn and a stables. The dwelling appears to have been a substantial building, an inventory from 1708 (see appendix 1) shows the presence of 10 rooms and a cellar. Interim reports on the May, July and August 2009 excavations are available on the WAS website.

4 Field Methodology for PAR09/c Excavation

4.1 Objectives

Based on the results of the August 2009 excavations and any further documentary evidence that materialises in the interim we have the following objectives:-

- 1. Can we delimit the area the southern boundary of the built area and does it abut the path to the churchyard along its length?**
- 2. Do the pits found in Trench R represent a line of post holes?**
- 3. What is the function of the packed ironstone found in Trench Q?**

4.2 Excavation Approach

Depending on the numbers of members attending and weather, six trenches will be opened (trenches S, T, U, V, W and X). These will be deturfed and dug by hand. The maximum depth of excavation will be controlled by the depth of the chalk surface in the trenches.

4.2.1 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.



Figure 1 Proposed trenches, August 2009

4.2.2 Environmental Material

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

4.2.3 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 2 days commencing on 1st August 2009. WAS members will be on site from Thursday 30th July in order to facilitate a quick start on the Saturday. The trenches will be deturfed on Friday 31st August by a small team of members.

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 conservation 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. All personnel will be members of WAS.