A report on the clearance of the Slindon House Stable Block by Worthing Archaeological Society, 2012/13

Compiled by John Green

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Introduction

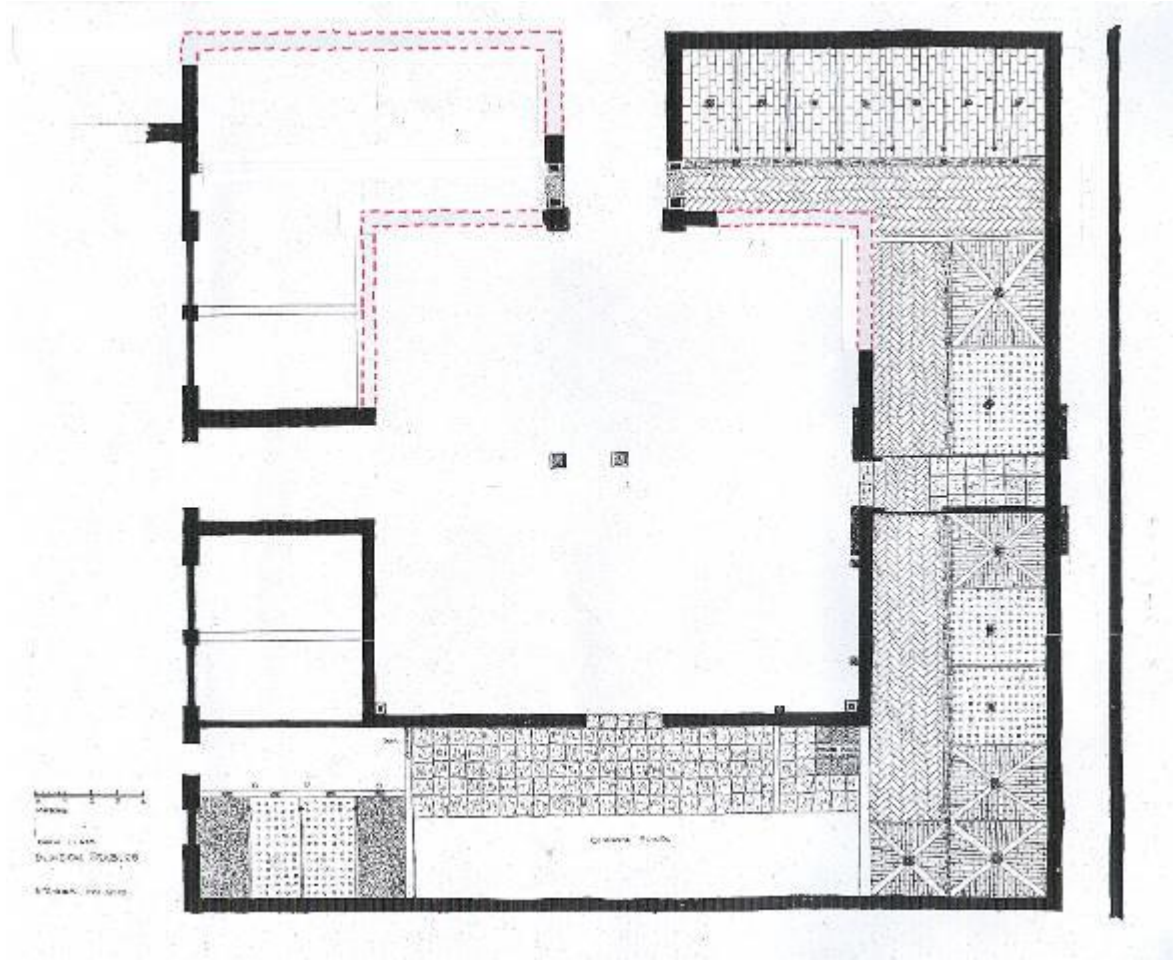
Adjoining the NT office at Slindon is a row of brick arches with a door leading to a paved yard. This is all that remains of an extensive stable block that once served Slindon House. However, it is an enduring remnant and in 2012/13 Worthing Archaeological Society took on the challenge of clearing the yard and uncovering the floor plan. This revealed many details about the shape and design of the building and it was possible to inspect and measure the surfaces, which are largely intact. Research at Polesden Lacey uncovered an inventory and schedule prepared by the War Ministry which provides a detailed summary of the condition of the stables in 1940 and enables us to better imagine the lost structure.

It is easy to overlook the importance of stables; they are buildings that have largely passed from the experience of most people and vanished from the landscape but, in the age of horse transport, anyone who owned a horse had either to build a stable or pay to lodge the animal in a livery stable. On a large estate, of course, there would be many horses, heavy horses for agriculture and forestry, hacks for the family and visitors to ride, carriage horses and ponies for traps and gigs and perhaps a few thoroughbreds and hunters. There would also be a number of men and boys to look after the horses, and grooms, coachmen, and yard boys were all accommodated in the stable block along with all the horse drawn vehicles, hay, feedstuffs, tack and other equipment .Visitors too, of course, would arrive on horseback or by carriage and space would need to be kept for their mounts.

There was a long tradition among landowners of building extensive stables. There were architects who specialised in drawing plans for them and magazines for gentleman frequently featured their designs. All the principal houses, surrounding Slindon, namely Goodwood, Petworth, Wiston, Parham and Arundel had impressive stable blocks and in the construction of the Slindon block the owners of Slindon House were following a trend.

There is no evidence to suggest that any of the famous architects were involved in the design of Slindon's stables; no plans have ever come to light. There is a strong vernacular style in the village of Slindon, using brick and flint, and the stable block was built in a similar style. It may well be that the stables of nearby grand houses, more often constructed in stone, were plundered for ideas but executed by local craftsmen. Certainly there were expert brick makers, flint knappers and brick layers in the village; evidence of their skills is visible in the tall walls that surround Slindon House and the many flint houses with brick quoins that are scattered throughout the village.

Although the materials may be different, the Slindon building shares several features with those of the larger estates. It was built as four connected wings. It was two storeys high and had arcades both inside and out. It had windows in the popular Diocletian style with shallow arches. It had prominent entrances with pediments. It had a clock tower and a paved courtyard. The actual stables were paved and as well as stables there were loose boxes. (see plan below)



Plan of Slindon Stable Block (red lines indicate areas that are covered or missing but are added on the assumption that the building was symmetrical)

The inclusion of loose boxes may be the best clue to the age of the building. Giles Worsley in his comprehensive book "The British Stable" wrote that "the most significant innovation of late 18th C design was the introduction of the loose box…this was a pen, 10ft or more square, sometimes known as the cage box, enclosed on all sides, within which limits the horse has freedom of movement as opposed to the enforced idleness of the stall….In 1785 even the most sophisticated country house stables did not have loose boxes." [1.] For those unfamiliar with stables, a stall is a narrow cell with a tether at the top end, where a horse is obliged to stand in the same position all the time. A loose box, with larger dimensions, allows a horse to turn round and even lie down in the space.

The accounts and papers of the Slindon Estate have been lost so it is not possible to trace the construction of the stable block or, for that matter, the many alterations to the House itself. There are however one or two clues in the Court Rolls of Slindon Manor. In 1806 it was recorded that "the Homage consents that the Lord should extend his fence from the bottom of Chispit Brow to the stables of the Lord (not injuring or incommoding the highway there) and that the Lord may enclose the Road from the West End of the said stables to the back gates of the Mansion House, the Lord making a good carriage road below at his expense…" [2.] This entry does not necessarily mean that the Stable Block by this date was complete; indeed it may refer to earlier stables. In fact, like modern housing estates, the road may well have been put in early to make the transport of materials easier. The building, and both roads, are shown on the 1840 Tithe Map which is the earliest large scale map of Slindon.

A probable period for the construction might be between 1800 and 1810. The Lord at that time was Anthony James Radcliffe, Earl of Newburgh. He had inherited Slindon after his father's death in 1786. In 1788 his fortunes greatly improved when Parliament granted him and his heirs an annual pension of £2500. This probably equates to about a quarter of a million in modern money and would have given him the funds to upgrade his property. In 1789 he married Anne Webb, who was to live until she was 99 years old. Although the Earl died in 1814, she plainly continued his programme of alteration and improvements, for in 1824 there is another entry on the Slindon Court Rolls that confirms "consent to enclose one quarter of an acre of land lying on the south east side of the fence separating Slindon Common from the Highwood at the SW corner of the Common at and near the place where the said Lady is now erecting a stone gateway or entrance from the Common into the wood." This would provide a suitable entrance to the estate and a private carriage road led from this gateway through the woods to the House, offering tantalizing glimpses of Slindon House through the trees, in accordance with the best principles of landscaping. On the way visitors would pass the new stable block so it is no surprise that it was on this elevation that the clock tower was raised.

The stable block was struck by fire in the 1960s. (fig.4) There is surprisingly little local memory of this event although there are several photographs. So far no newspaper account has surfaced so these photos provide the best clues to what happened. It seems that prior to the fire the whole building had fallen into disrepair. Perhaps it never recovered from its wartime use. It was apparently used for keeping pigs and for the storage of hay and feeds. The story is that schoolboys from the adjacent school were in the habit of using one of the upper rooms as a smoking den and it is easy to imagine how the disaster developed. The photographs of the fire only show the southern wing but it was plainly well alight, sufficient to burn through the heavy timbers supporting the clock tower. The photographs do not show any fire-fighting activity, maybe the building by this time was so poorly esteemed that it was allowed to burn. Plainly, the debris was later removed down to ground level and the space was reused as a yard.

Photographic evidence

The stable block sat on the lower slopes of the chalk hill on which Slindon House is built. We are fortunate that aerial photographs from 1935 exist, which show the plan of the building before its destruction. (fig.1) There are also a few photographs that show the exterior of the building. (fig.3) These confirm what emerged from our clearance, namely, that the stable block was a square, largely symmetrical building 150 ft square,* of two storeys with a central quadrangle.. From the photographs we know that the slated roof was of two spans with leaded valleys and boxed gutters. On the outside the roof overhung the walls but in the courtyard the roof was faced by a parapet with stone coping. The walls were built of bricks laid in Flemish bond with burnt headers.

Each of the wings except the West Wing had an arcade of eight arched windows on the lower storey in the Diocletian style, directly under a prominent string course. Above the string course were smaller square windows for the upper storey, one above each arch. Because of the depth of the corridors only half the number of window arches appears in the courtyard elevations. From the photographs we know that some of the outside arches were either built blind or stopped up later, while on the inner courtyard the arches held hinged windows.

Above the South Wing was a clock and bell tower. This appears to have been a substantial wooden structure in three sections. The lower part was faced with slates; the centre section was lead faced with clock dials on at least two elevations and glazed panels on the other sides. Above the clocks was an open section for the bell and lever arm and the whole was topped by a hipped slate roof with an ornamental weather vane.

Central to each wall was an aedicule 24 ft wide, stepped forward by one brick, with an archway supporting a brick pediment above the second storey, pierced by a bull's eye window. The gable above the pediment was supported on the outside by dentil brickwork but where the feature was repeated in the courtyard the stone coping continued over the gable. The archways on the North and South elevations were large entrances 13 ft wide and reaching to the height of the window sill on the second floor. Probably both of these had substantial wooden doors. The archway on the East side was a short and narrow pedestrian entrance. The West wing broke the symmetrical appearance of the building having an unbalanced run of archways, mostly just openings for the access of traps and wagons. On this side the upper windows appear to have been blind. (fig. 5)

* I have chosen to give all the measurements of the stable block in feet. These are obviously the units which the builders used and, to my mind, give a better feel for the proportions of the building.

Archaeological Evidence

North Wing, East End Apart from the arcade which abuts the NT office none of the stable block now exists above ground level. The space it occupied is enclosed within a low wall with a fence on the east side and the back of a long building belonging to the College on the south. On the north there is a fence and a pair of wooden sheds but these do not follow the original line of the building, being about 7ft inside it. The brick forecourt outside the sheds is actually the floor of the east end of the North Wing. (fig 6) It is easy to see the well-preserved floors of seven stalls that were built along this range. F Each of them is 6ft wide. [3.] They were laid with red bricks on their sides giving a very tightly bonded surface. In front of the stalls is a brick channel, five bricks wide, laid concavely and in front of the channel is a corridor laid with the same bricks but in a herringbone style. Each of the stalls has a small central drain and there are four more, connected, drains along the channel. Between each pair of stalls are the remains of a cast iron post and a metal floor strip which would have supported the wooden shuttering between the stalls. Part of the corridor of this wing lies beneath the sheds.

East Wing Worthing Archaeological Society began to clear debris and vegetation from the stable block in the winter of 2012 and it was quickly apparent that the foundations of the building were in surprisingly good condition. First to be uncovered was the East Wing, adjacent to the Society's storage shed. This revealed a row of surfaces with a corridor alongside, separated by a skilfully laid channel made of five bricks laid on edge with a slight concave curve. There are two large areas and five smaller rooms with one more on the return at the southern end of the range. By their size we judge that these were loose boxes. Five of the rooms are paved with edgewise bricks, sloping slightly to assist drainage. The floors have been divided diagonally and a double row of bricks runs from the corner to the centre of the stall. Bricks have been skilfully cut slantwise to fill the triangular spaces created. Each of these rooms has a small central drain with a cast iron drain cover or an earthenware drainage tile. The three other rooms on this range are paved with hard-glazed, black, "chocolate block" pavers. These also slope to a drain. It is possible that these hard-glazed floors are a later alteration; the brickwork of the other rooms is very smooth and flush but the edges of these floors protrude and have a less finished appearance. The northernmost room is 12 ft wide, and may have replaced two stalls and the other two, which lie next to each other, measure 18ft wide, or three stalls width. The corridor is made from the same bricks laid on edge but here they are laid in a herringbone pattern.

Midway along this range there is a brief change of surface to flag stones. (fig.7) Many of these are broken and laminating but one or two are sufficiently intact to show that they were once thick stones about 18ins x 12ins. They run through the wing from the outside towards the courtyard where a substantial threshold is still in place, creating a narrow passageway. This flagged passage corresponds to the archway that can be seen in the photographs. The passage way is crossed by the herringbone corridor which runs the whole length of this wing. There is a slight evidence of thresholds where the corridor crosses the passage, suggesting that there were doorways opening both north and south, giving access into the corridor. This fits with the layout of surviving stable blocks elsewhere. Going south, the corridor stops at the last loose box which makes the corner with the South Wing.

The outer wall is two feet wide and of mixed construction. There is a single skin of bricks on both faces and the space between is filled with chalk and flints. Every couple of feet a brick is turned sideways, further confirming the Flemish bond that can be seen on the photographs and the remaining arcade. The protruding entrance feature can be clearly seen on both inner and outer walls, one brick wider for about 5ft either side of the entrance. More solid brickwork can be seen in the

corner piers that would have supported the arches. The inner courtyard wall is three bricks thick and internal walls, between the stalls and alongside the passage, are two bricks thick.

South Wing The floor of the South Wing is completely different. For three quarters of the length it is surfaced with large flagstones. (fig.8) Most of these are now laminating and some are broken but it is easy to see that this was once a substantial and impressive floor. It was probably the coach house and we know from photographs that there were heavy wooden doors on both elevations that would have allowed passage both into and through the wing. There is one exception to this spread; at the start of the flags, against the inner wall of the courtyard, is a patch of thick mortar about 4ft x 6ft laid on top of the flags. This is probably the hearth for a fireplace; one is mentioned in the War Ministry Schedule and this is probably therefore the location of the saddle room which was traditionally the domain of the head groom and usually quite snug. A couple of feet away in the courtyard is a shallow drain gully, often found where a pipe empties through a wall.

Unfortunately the wall of a shed belonging to Slindon College overlays the south outer wall of the Stable block and inside this wall is a modern concrete plinth about 2ft thick, which stretches over half the length of the wing. This makes it impossible to see any evidence of the entrance on the south side, although there are several photographs of this elevation and it is plain that it matched the internal opening. The footings for the central arched feature can be clearly seen on the courtyard wall and in the centre of the entrance is a small square hole, cut for the bolt of the doors. The inner, courtyard, walls are the same thickness as on the east wing.

Photographs of the fire that destroyed the stable block show that it was fiercest in the area of the clock tower, which was above the central arch. During clearance we found burned material in this area with melted lead and thick pieces of glass. The flagstones here are darkened from burning. This cannot be confirmed as evidence of the fire however because the Trust frequently have large bonfires in the courtyard.

The flagstones end at the footings of an internal wall 26ft from the SW corner. This wall once had a narrow doorway at right angles to the inner wall of the courtyard; the slots for the door jamb can still be seen. Between this wall and the west wall of the block (still standing to half height) are the floors of four more stalls. This corner is used by NT to store building materials but we were able to move enough to establish that the first and last stalls have cobbled surfaces and the middle pair is laid with “chocolate block” paving. (fig.9) There are the remains of iron stanchions between the stalls, in this case about 12 inches high. We were also able to see that there is a concave brick channel in front of the stalls, laid in the same fashion as on the other wings with a drain outside each stall. It is reasonable to expect that there would have been a herringbone corridor in front of the drains as on the north and east wings but, if it is existed, it cannot now be seen as this area (which leads to the west door) has been overlaid at some time with concrete.

There is about a 6ft width of the original south wall still standing in this corner. It reaches the top of the arched west wall but is tumbled or broken down towards the college shed. Its construction is unexpected. We have photographs of the outside of this wall which is plainly constructed entirely of brick in the Flemish bond. The inner remnant, however, has just a brick quoin in the corner but is otherwise filled with chalk and flints in a very rough and ready fashion. Further exploration would be necessary to establish whether this was the standard inner face of the outside walls or whether, perhaps, an earlier building has been incorporated into the block at this point. This is a possibility as there is a complex of buildings still abutting to this corner. These are also the only stalls which have cobbles, known to be the usual surface of early stables. This corner was evidently a special area. It had its own outside door and window on the west front, both of which disturb the symmetry of the

stable block and the War Ministry Schedule excluded this room from the requisition because there was "no entrance from the quadrangle."

The lower part of this corner is thickly plastered with mortar to about 5ft above the ground. There is a clear edge to the plaster and it slopes diagonally down towards the door on the west wall, suggesting that this was the original finish inside the stalls. There is no evidence that the plastering ever continued any higher.

West Wing The outer wall of the West Wing is still standing (fig.10) and therefore ought to give the best clues to the construction and appearance of the stable block. However it can only provide limited information as it is atypical. While we are fairly certain from both photographs and floor plans that the other three wings resembled each other and were symmetrical this wing breaks the pattern, on the external face at least. The other wings each had eight arches on the lower storey, regularly spaced; this wing had two wide arches either side of the central arch and pediment, balanced by a narrow window arch at each end but also pierced by a low doorway near the south end. The two arches at the northern end have been incorporated into the NT office and, at some time, the four central arches have been partially bricked up to nearly half their height. This infilling has been carefully added to match the original brickwork and to correspond to the height of the original window sill beside the stable door. The upper windows on this front were probably blind on the outside but there may have been opening windows onto the courtyard. Indeed, it is likely that the inner face of this wing matched the other three.

The floors at the southern end of this wing have been concreted over, more than once, and there is a series of post holes about a foot away from the line of the inner, courtyard, wall. These look as if they might have supported a fence or partition and probably relate to some repurposing of the space after the fire. They would not make sense if the inner wall was still in place. Nearer the arches the floors have been broken by a service trench but there is no evidence of the brick floors present in the other wings. There are at least four internal walls running at right angles to the arches and it seems that each arch opened to a room behind. Some of the arches have the pins for gate hinges or doors. Because of the concreting it is not clear whether there were any connecting doors between the rooms. The pillars of the three central arches have chamfered brickwork which would ease the passage of vehicles so we can assume that these rooms were used to store carts, traps and waggons and perhaps, from the early twentieth century, motor cars. The main yard surface continues as a drive for the width of the centre arch. (fig.11)

A lot of timber is stored in this area so it was not possible to inspect the floors thoroughly at the northern end. However, by probing we were able to find sufficient evidence to confirm that the plan of the building corresponds to the layout of the other wings.

North Wing, West End

This is the least distinct area of the stable block. Inside the yard it is largely overlaid by timber stacks and by wood chippings to a depth of about a foot. The northern wall lies outside the present fence in a sloping area of grass and brambles. This wall would originally have joined the western arcade several feet from the corner of the NT office. There is a remnant of this junction among the brambles. (fig.13)

A full excavation would be necessary to establish the exact layout of this end of the north wing but by probing we have been able to discover a few details. The footings of the inner courtyard wall can be seen where it meets the entrance passageway, although the floors appear to be very broken up. We found parts of a channel with drains to match that visible on the other side of the gateway and

this suggests that there was another set of stalls at this end. However, the brick channel is much distorted either through tree damage or by collapse or subsidence. It may be that this corner of the building had begun to slip away. Interestingly, the 1940 Schedule reports that the floor surface in this corner was, "old, worn, undulating, stones disintegrating and generally very dilapidated."

Another possibility is that this NW corner, like the opposite SW corner incorporated an older building. The remnant in the undergrowth and the rear wall of the NT office are of a different construction to the exterior shown in the photographs. Again, these may be glimpses of a less well finished internal face but could also be the result of patching or alterations. (fig. 12)
The gateway on the north wing matches the dimensions of that on the south side. The footings for the walls here can still be traced and, within the gateway on the east side there is a stone threshold that would have given single door access to the internal corridor and probably the stairs to the upper floor.

Upper Floors

We have little archaeological evidence for the upper floors but there is a description in the War Ministry Schedule. From this we learn that there was a stair case of two flights to the upper floor in each wing, with a handrail and a single, lockable, panelled door at the top. In the north wing the stair gave access to corn stores and hay lofts with hay chutes that led to the stables below. In the east wing, the first section seems to have been a utility room with a cupboard and a sink, a W.C., a ten gallon copper and a galvanised storage tank. Further along this loft is an area described as a coachman's living quarters, with a passage, two bedrooms, a fireplace and a kitchen and scullery.

There is more accommodation in the south wing with a flat containing a bathroom, a long passage, three or four bedrooms, a store room and W.C. and a kitchen and scullery with a small cooking range. Both of these living areas were divided by partitions and panelled with match lining so they are probably not original but were in place when the building was requisitioned by the War Ministry. A Victorian photograph of the Stable Block shows a wooden stairway in the southeast corner to the upper floor of the south wing and a wooden door in place of the last window.

Also on the upper floor of the south wing south wing was the loft to the clock tower. The structure of the tower was visible in this room with two floors supported by heavy baulks of braced timber resting on two10 x 6 inch RSJs. There was a single, bulls-eye window.

There seems, from the description in the Schedule, to have been a continuous loft in the west wing with five sash windows overlooking the courtyard. This corresponds with one of the entries in Jimmy Dean's diary, where he mentions "a large ball room up over the stables called the Rink."

The Stable Yard

The stable yard was paved with large, yellow bricks, moulded with four wide spaced lozenges on the top surface. These bricks are largely still in place although covered with an inch or two of mud and, in some areas, piles of timber. They meet the inner walls of the courtyard with a brick fillet and extend as driveways into the central entrances on the north and west wings. Because these bricks are soft the top surfaces have sometimes laminated or been worn away but it is easy to see that they would have created a tidy and impressive yard. Only the edges of the yard were cleared in our exploration.

In the middle of the yard is a small drain, 19 inches square. Its central position suggests that it was the main drain for the regular sweepings and sluicings of the yard. When there is heavy rain the central area becomes very muddy and sometimes floods, suggesting that the drain is blocked.

Nearby is a brick built manhole. It has no cover and is full of earth. The Schedule describes two such manholes. Our suspicion is that these gave access to an underground cistern for storing rain water from the roof. (See appendix 1) Near to this manhole is a large concrete slab several inches thick which may be covering another opening. What we have not found are two soak-aways with iron grills that are mentioned in the Schedule.

There are also small drains in the south east and south west corners of the courtyard and another beside the pedestrian entrance on the east wing. All have cast iron grids though they may not be original. These three drains appear to be part of the original build and probably had downpipes carrying rain water from the roof. No doubt there were similar drains in the other corners which are still covered with debris or buildings.

We uncovered two more drains in the courtyard. Both have cast iron grids. One is against the inner wall on the southern end of the east wing and was probably below an outdoor tap; the other is against the inner wall of the south wing, to the east of the doorway. This last drain has a shallow surface gully, plainly a later addition, and looks like the kind of drain that would serve a pipe from a sink. It is on one of the wings where we know that there was living accommodation at the time of the wartime requisition.

Outside the building.

The final feature of note is beyond the line of the east wing. The Schedule describes it as a "dwarf brick wall, 2'3" high with saddle brick coping. To the bottom of the wall is an old brick channel about 12" wide falling to a gully in the centre, complete with grid." (fig.14) Although the wall is still intact, now capped by a fence marking the boundary between the NT yard and the College beyond, the channel has collapsed for much of its length. However, enough remains to show that it was constructed of the same bricks as the stable floors, with five or six laid edgewise with careful cambering to create a concave channel exactly like those inside the stables.

The College ground rises quite steeply behind this wall and our best guess at the purpose of this wall is that it was built to overcome a problem with seepage. It may not have been part of the original design but added later to drain water out of the slope, hence the channel to direct the seepage to the gully.

The gully is directly opposite the pedestrian entrance on that wing and immediately outside the threshold is a square drain with a grid. This, in turn, lines up with the central drain in the courtyard, leading us to suppose that the gully connected to the main drainage scheme. We sought permission to investigate this further with a proper excavation of the drain (see appendix 1) but found what appeared to be a supply pipe. If the gully connects to the courtyard drain it must do so at a much deeper level.

Conclusions and recommendations

Apart from the archaeological interest of this surprising ruin, there was a practical purpose to our clearance of the site. We understood that National Trust were keen to completely clear and repurpose the yard, perhaps as a car park. There was talk of a visitor board with pictures and information about the stable block. To this end, we made a thorough clearance where we could reach with the understanding that other spaces would be cleared later.

Unfortunately, this has not happened. More rubbish and building materials have been dropped in the yard; heavy vehicles have been driven over exposed surfaces and, worst of all the vegetation has been allowed to grow back. This last is a most worrying threat to the archaeology; the working groups removed nettles, brambles, willow-herbs and elders which were mostly growing with lateral roots in thin soil above the paved surfaces. Because the surfaces have now been opened to the air but have not been treated with weed killer, pernicious seeds have worked their way into the cracks between the bricks and pavers. This has led to sturdier weeds taking deep root and there is a real risk of lasting damage to the surfaces and foundations.

No doubt there are many considerations involved in developing a strategy for the future of the yard. We are aware that there are some special habitats within the enclosure which may need protection. If the archaeology is not to be lost then perhaps a covering of sand or wood chippings might be a possible way forward but this would demand another clearance and selective use of weed killer.

There is another consideration. Our research suggests that underneath the courtyard is at least one large cistern that was designed to take the rainwater from the roofs. We have the mention of "a large deep tank in the stable yard" in Jimmy Dean's Diary, (see appendix 1) the manholes and soak-aways mentioned in the Schedule, and the twin- gabled design of the roof which would have maximised the collection. In addition there is anecdotal evidence. Mrs Harding, who lived above the stables as a girl (see appendix 2) remembers dropping stones through an iron grid and waiting several seconds for the sound of the splash. An estate worker was present when a large slab was lifted in the yard to reveal what was thought to be a sewer, fashioned with brick pillars and arches, but which is probably a cistern. Given the fact that there are no springs in the village and wells in Slindon all have to be dug very deep, the storage of grey water under the yard makes perfect sense. The Schedule records that there was a pump on the east wall of the courtyard; if the slab on the opposite side hides an entrance this suggests that the cistern may be very extensive, stretching the entire width of the courtyard.

There is an obvious implication here. Any development, especially if it involves the weight of heavy vehicles will demand caution. Investigation of the cistern, its condition and safety, will probably be necessary, even to continue with the present uses of the yard. This will be a job for experienced surveyors but if Worthing Archaeological Society can assist with any aspect of this investigation, we will be happy to do so.

There are other, archaeological, investigations that might be undertaken. Both the south west and the north west corners of the stable block appear to be different from the rest of the construction and may have been parts of an earlier building. There is also archaeology hidden under the grassed area outside the fence on the north. For a better understanding of the building it would be good to explore these areas further but this would require a proper excavation with deep trenches.

This is a significant building and part of the history of Slindon, albeit largely unknown. We would be keen to cooperate with any exploration that could extend our knowledge of the Slindon Stable Block.

Footnotes

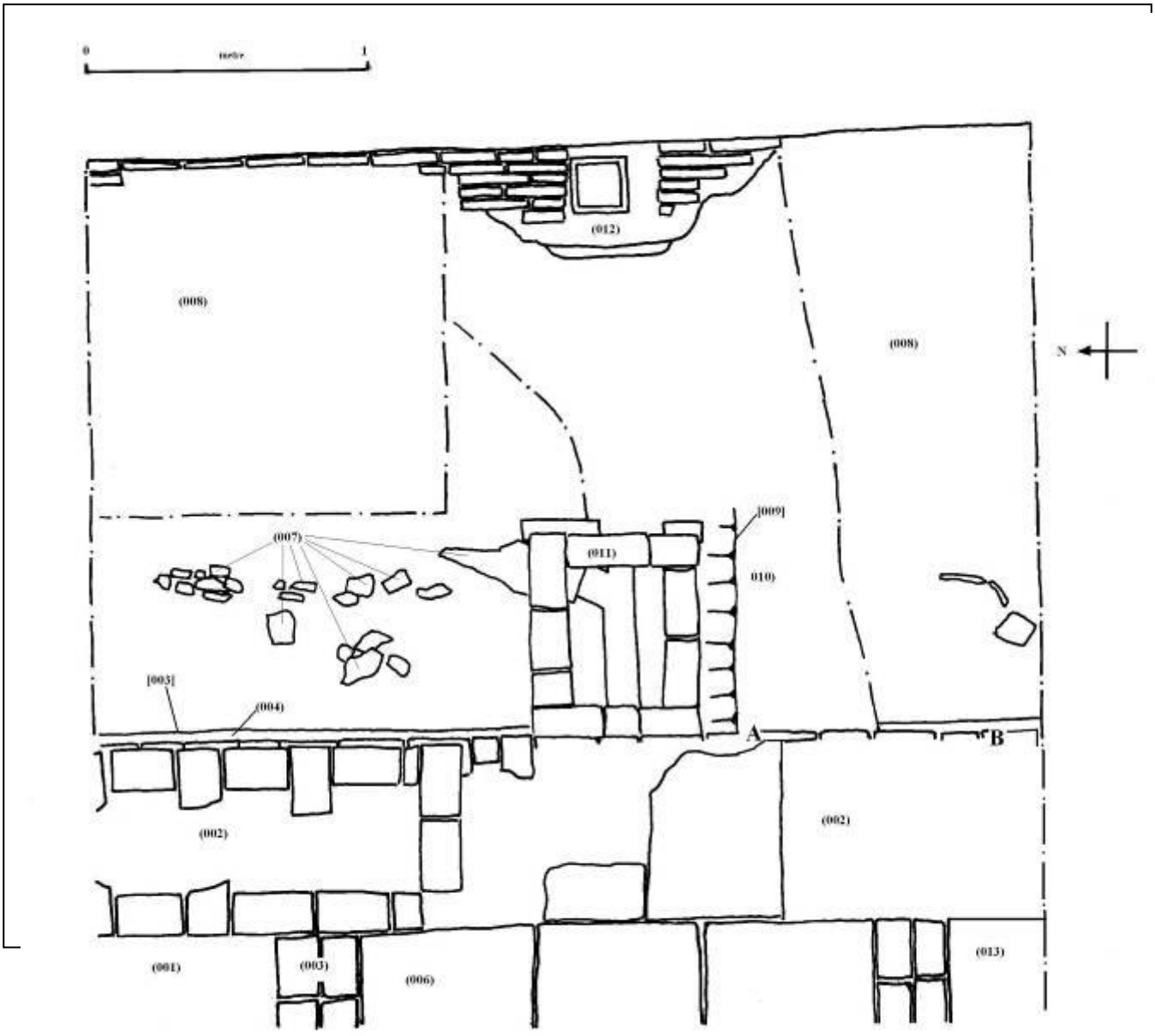
[1.] *The British Stable* (2004) An Architectural and Social History (based on Worsley's PhD thesis), photography by William Curtis Rolf, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, ISBN 978-0-300-10708-1

[2.] The old highway mentioned here is now the driveway to Slindon College and the NT base camp and its original route can still be seen continuing through the shrubbery towards the new road.

[3.] Clifford recommended in 1565 that a stall should be 5ft wide and this seems generally to have remained standard until the late eighteenth century. William Ward, writing in 1776, recommended that stalls should be 6ft wide and this became the common width for stalls.

Appendix 1: Report on the Excavation at Slindon Stable Yard, May 2013, Pete Brannlund

This excavation was carried out by Worthing Archaeological Society on 25th and 26th May, 2013, with the permission of the archaeologist of the National Trust. A single trench (trench 1), measuring 3.16 by 2.1m, was opened on the eastern side of the stable yard, covering the area between the exposed eastern wall of the stables and the retaining wall. The trench was excavated by hand, all identified contexts were recorded and the trench planned (see Figure 1), a section drawn (see Figure 2) and photographed (see Figure 3) before being backfilled on the 27th May. Artefacts were only recovered from open contexts; these were not retained but returned to the same context during backfilling.



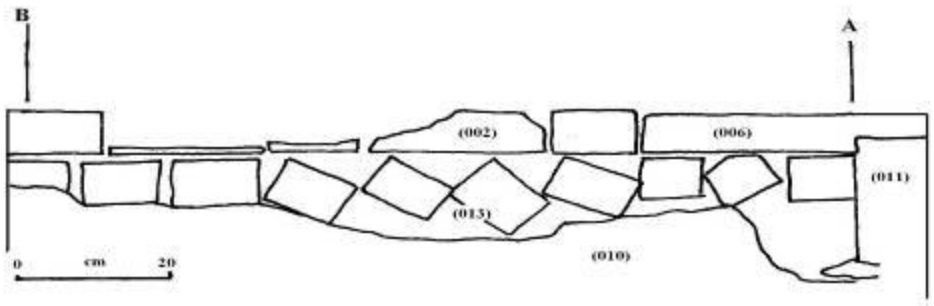


Figure 2. Section to show depth of the foundation

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The excavation had three objectives:

Objective 1. To see the condition of the preserved remains below surface.

This objective needs to be rethought in the light of further archival research. The trench provided a very limited snap shot of the below surface structure, which appeared to be in very good condition and stable. However, a recent archival 'discovery' suggests that there is a large water storage facility beneath the courtyard of the stables and further work needs to be undertaken if we are to ascertain its condition.

Objective2. To ascertain the depth of the foundations of the stable block and their construction method

In the area excavated the foundations extend to a maximum depth of 17cm, being founded on solid chalk. They are essentially a leveling feature (composed of brick in mortar) on which the wall was constructed.

Objective 3. To investigate possible phasing regarding the drains in that area.

Prior to the excavation it was assumed that feature 2 (see Figure 4, an interpretation of the features seen in trench 1), the drain attached to the eastern retaining wall, would link up with the drain that runs beneath the internal corridor. However, there is no subsurface connection between the two features and we currently think that feature 2 lead to a soak away. It, and the associated brick built drain, appear to have been added to the eastern retaining wall, almost certainly to cope with a drainage problem that arose after the construction of the stables.

Context (007) is the shattered remains of a ceramic pipe leading to context (011), the manhole. Initially this was interpreted as a drain, possibly to deal with runoff, via guttering and downpipes, from the roof. Although we have been unable to date any of the materials used in construction, the ceramic pipe is glazed suggesting a late 19th, early 20th century date

for construction. In addition, the bricks used in the construction of the manhole are bigger than those used in the wall of the building, again suggesting a different phase of construction. The pipe, though shattered and very fragmentary, appears to angle into the manhole in a direction that would lead away from the stables.

Subsequent to the excavation, an archival search, at WSRO, of Jimmy Dean's diaries uncovered the following entry;

"At the death of Anne, Countess of Newburgh, in 1861, Slindon House was shut up and locked with a large chain around the gates. The workmen had to go round and get into the place best they could for a time. All the milk to Slindon villagers was stopped for a time and the villagers (prevented) from getting water from the very large, deep tank at Slindon House Stable Yard."

We have heard anecdotal evidence of this water tank before, but this is the first documentary evidence uncovered. We had, wrongly, assumed that the tank might be used for drainage, but this source indicates that it was for water supply rather than disposal. That being the case, it is likely that originally it was used to collect rainwater (there are no streams or springs in the immediate vicinity) possibly from the roof of the stables. However, when piped water was bought into the village it may have been filled from the mains, and we therefore suspect that the shattered pipe in trench 1 may have been a water pipe leading from Top Road into the stables. This obviously requires more work to establish.

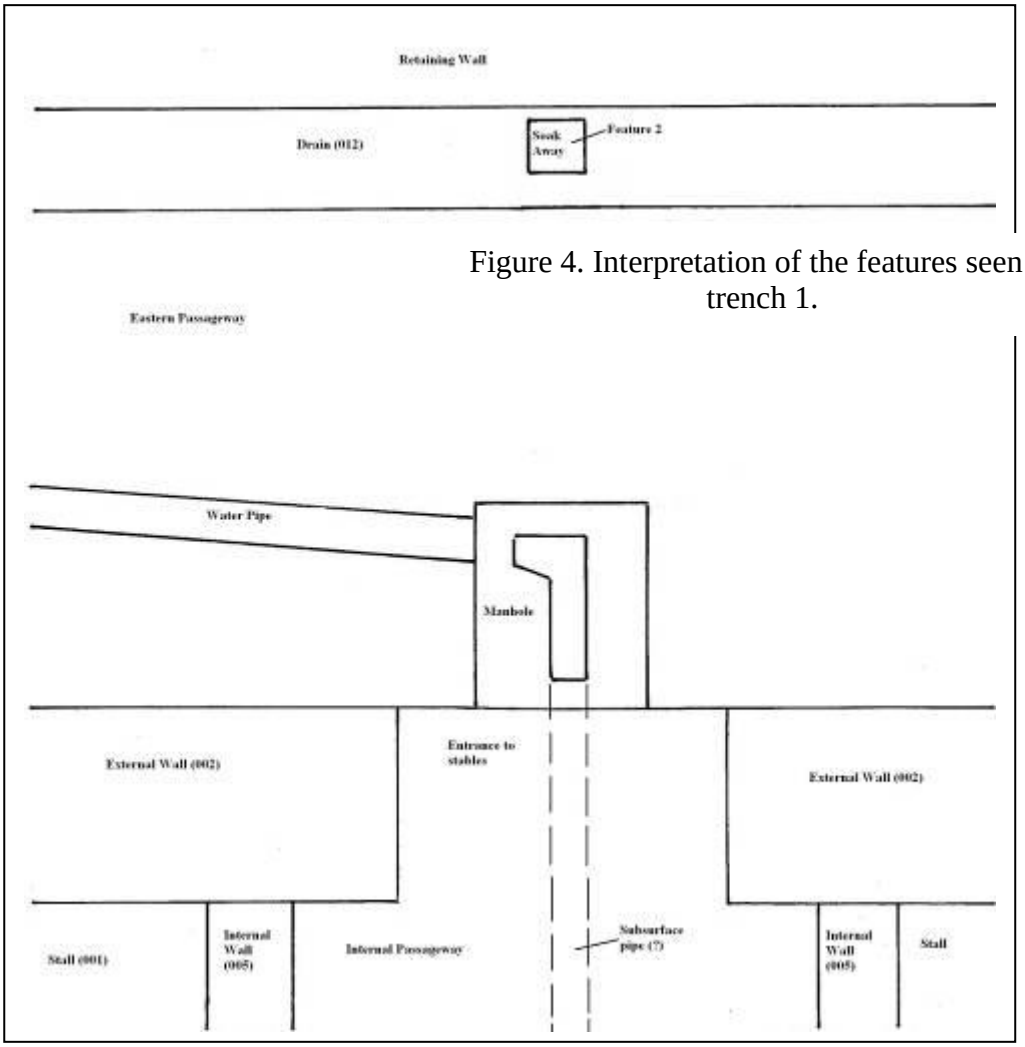

Figure 4. Interpretation of the features seen in trench 1.

Appendix 2: Recollections of Mrs.N.Harding

INTERVIEW with Mrs. Norah Harding and Mr. John Chamberlain, 16.07.2013

Mrs. Harding and John Chamberlain, her brother, lived with their parents above the garages in the south wing of the Slindon Stable Block. They had six brothers and sisters. Their father, Mr. Chamberlain, was chauffeur to the Wootton Isaacson family and, along with several other members of staff, had come with them to Slindon in 1913.

Their accommodation was accessed by the stairs in the arch centre of the south wing. Mrs. Harding had no recollection of the wooden staircase to the upper floor shown in the 1880 photograph of the staff. She remembers bedrooms, a kitchen and scullery, a "horrid bathroom" and one room which was kept as a best sitting room. Both she and her brother were born in these rooms. Mrs. Hayes, the wife of the groom was, conveniently, a midwife. The grooms, Bob Witmer and Mr. Hayes lived above the west wing. The ground floor was used to garage the cars, a Riley, a Sunbeam and an Armstrong Siddeley. The entrance to the garage was by the large doors from the central courtyard. Another of her father's duties was to wind the clock, which kept good time.

The family left the village when the house was requisitioned for war use and went to the West Country with the Isaacsons. Their furniture was put into storage in the building now used as the NT office but when they returned after the war they found that the Canadian troops had burned it.

Norah and John's memories were clear and corresponded closely with the schedule prepared for the War Department. They confirmed the existence of the deep water cistern(s) under the stable yard. Norah remembers two "wells" with iron grids; she was told not to drop stones down these shafts but frequently did and her recollection is that it was quite a drop. She said that the covers would have taken two men to lift but does not remember any pump or system for raising water from the cistern. She said that there was a pump outside the block on the SE corner, on the pathway to the house. She also remembered the mounting block, which was in the NW quadrant of the yard. Lady Beaumont mounted here. She rode side saddle and often joined the Hunt. She had several hunters which were kept in the stables with other, working, horses. There were also carthorses which had their own stable in the SW corner of the block, which was accessed from outside by the doorway in the arches.

The loft in the north wing was used to store hay and fodder and Norah thinks there were trapdoors to the stables directly below. The hay was loaded upstairs by bringing the hay wain alongside and pitching it through the open windows.

The west wing was used in those days to store carts and wagons. Mrs. Harding allowed me to copy photographs taken from outside the stable block showing this range and it is clear to see that these were open arches with bays behind them and that the first arch was equipped with stout doors. It is also clear that the outside windows on this range were bricked up, or built blind.

John and Norah also said that the Isaacsons kept hounds in the kennels behind what is now the Base Camp. This area was where their mother hung the washing; there was also a chaff cutter and a gadget for making "pimps", short bundles of hazel twigs bound by wire for laying fires.

They agreed with the story about the accidental burning of the building, attributed locally to schoolboys smoking in their old flat. They thought that Mr. Hart came as headmaster in 1960 and that the fire occurred two or three years later. They do not remember what happened to the building

following the fire but by this time John was on National Service and Norah was bringing up her children. However, she does not think much fuss was made about it locally so it may not have been such a big event as we had imagined.

Appendix 3: Photographs

Fig.1 : Aerial View of Slindon House Stable Block, photographed in 1935

www.britainfromabove.org.uk/cy/image/EPW047746
copyright English Heritage

Fig.2 : Staff of Slindon House photographed in the Stable Block Courtyard , c.1880

Copyright held by Robin Upton

Fig.3 : South Wing and Clock Tower

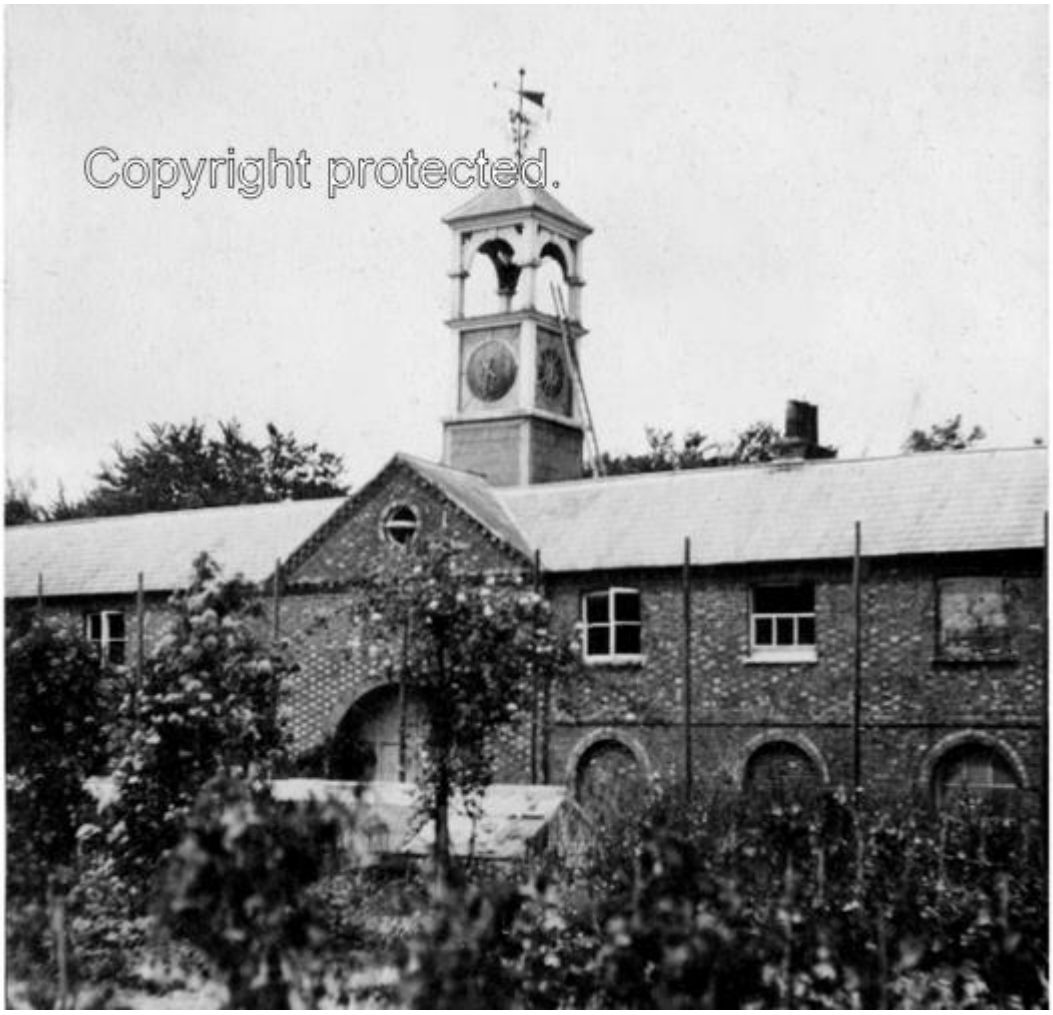

Fig.4 : The clock tower collapses as fire takes hold of the building

Fig.5 : The west wing, from a sketch published in the newspaper c.1930 by Mr. V. Slaymaker

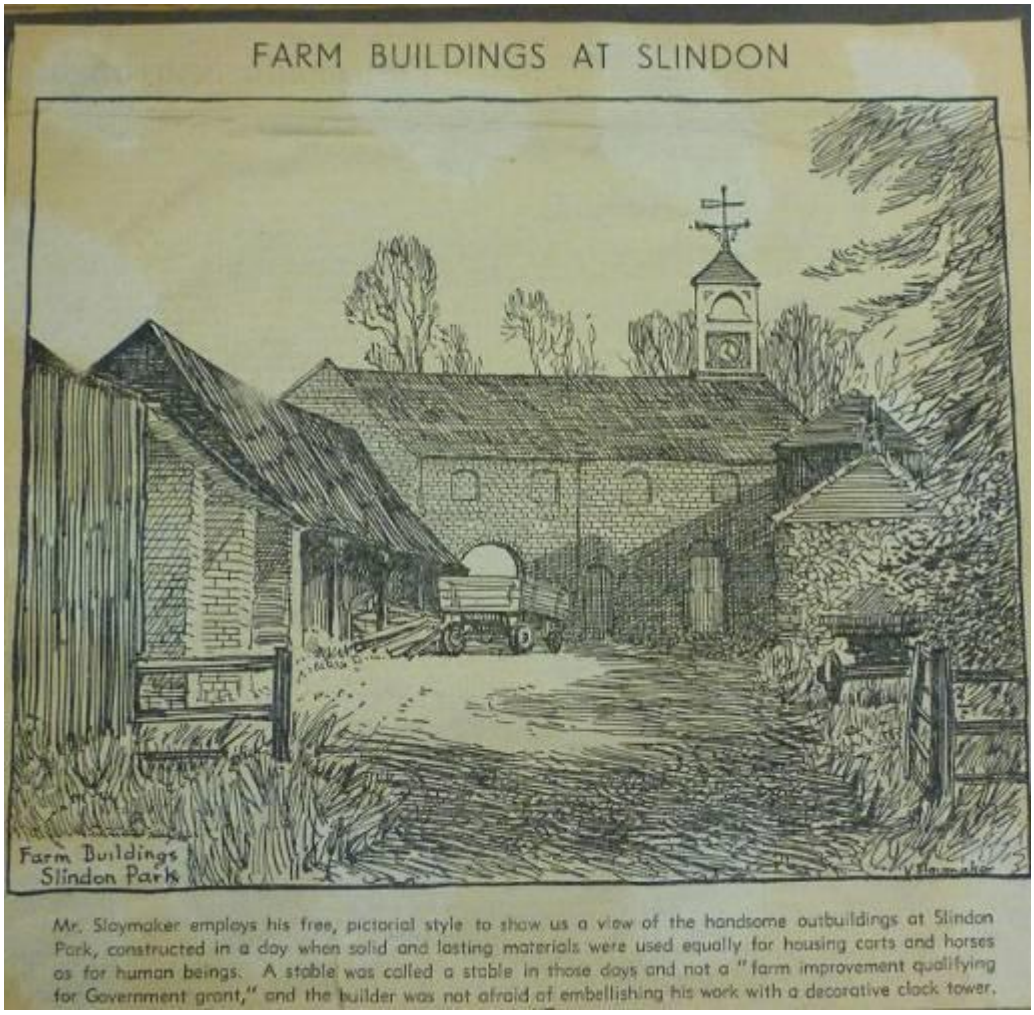

Fig.6 : Brick forecourt, old North Wing, showing stable floors and drains

Fig.7 : Floors of stables, passageway and loose boxes on East Wing, and foundations of outer wall

Fig.8 : Flagstones of the coach house floor on the south wing

Fig.9 : South west corner showing chocolate block pavers, cobbles and stanchions

Fig.10 : The brick arches of the west wall showing concrete floors and partition walls

Fig.11 : Paved driveway from blocked up central arch, showing chamfered piers, concrete overlay and the trench carrying modern services

Fig.12 : Irregular build of NW corner at end of arcade

Fig.13 : End of the west wall abutting NT office

Fig.14 : Retaining wall, brick channel and gully on east boundary of site