

A proposal for investigation and excavation to of the Roman Villa at Blacksmith's Corner, Walberton, West Sussex.

1. Introduction

A request by Luke Wishart has given the opportunity to perform a number of excavations to investigate the Roman Villa found there by Worthing Archaeological Society in 2006.

The Worthing Archaeological society (WAS) excavated the Villa in August 2006 and August 2007. This proposal outlines the scope of the investigations for the excavations due to take place between 16 August and 31 August 2008.

This project design includes an outline of preliminary the methodology for on site archaeological work, post-excavation archive preparation and report writing.

2. Project Scope

The following questions will be investigated by this project:

2.1. Did the 2007 excavation expose the floor of the villa building, or is (are) the floor(s) at greater depth?

The 2007 excavation revealed what appeared to be a floor level of the villa, with a small number of tesserae still possibly in situ. Was this the floor level of the villa? A sondage in 2007 showed the walls extend to a depth of 0.83m below the top of the wall. Are there any traces of earlier floors at greater depths?

2.2. Were the internal walls all constructed at the same time?

Two of the internal walls appeared to be abutted to the external walls. Can we determine the sequence and dating of the construction of the building? Is this evidence of a rebuild, or are the internal walls consistent with the other walls. If so, can any evidence be found to confirm or deny the assumption that the walls were delimiting a possible stair case?

2.3. Is the apsidal wall the position of a bath house?

An apsidal wall was located on the south-west corner of the villa building. There was also possible evidence of a stoke hole. Is this the location of the bath house?

3. Background

3.1. Topographical Background

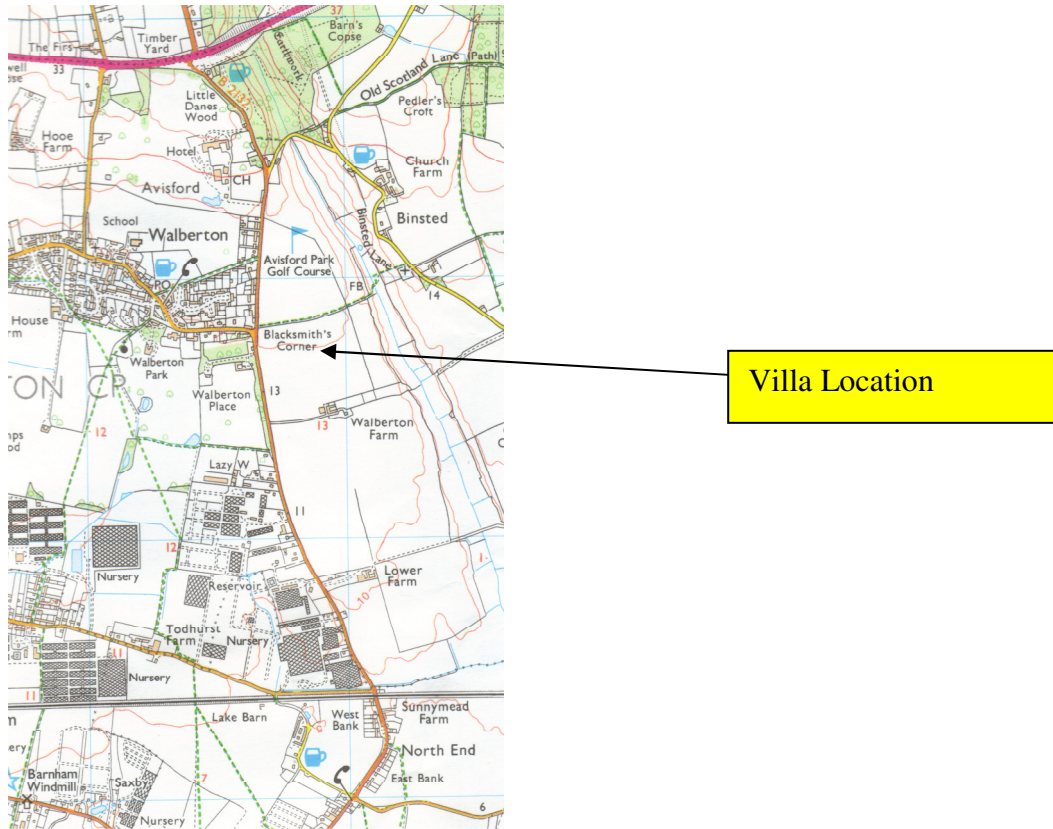
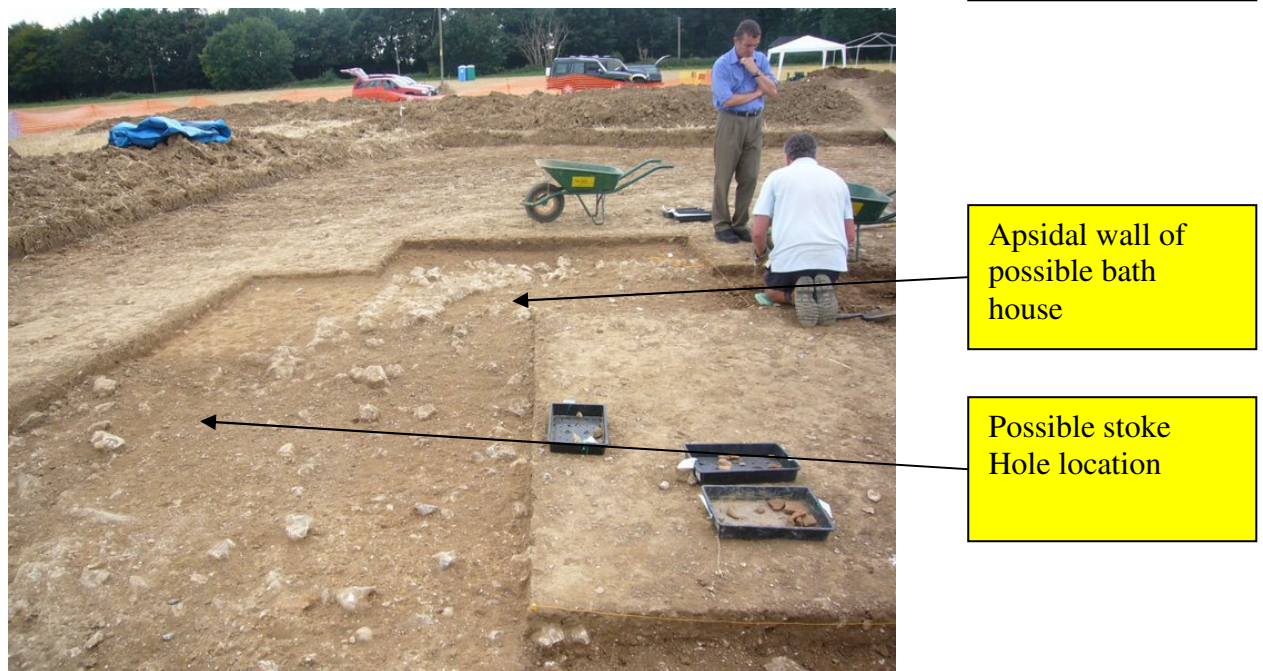
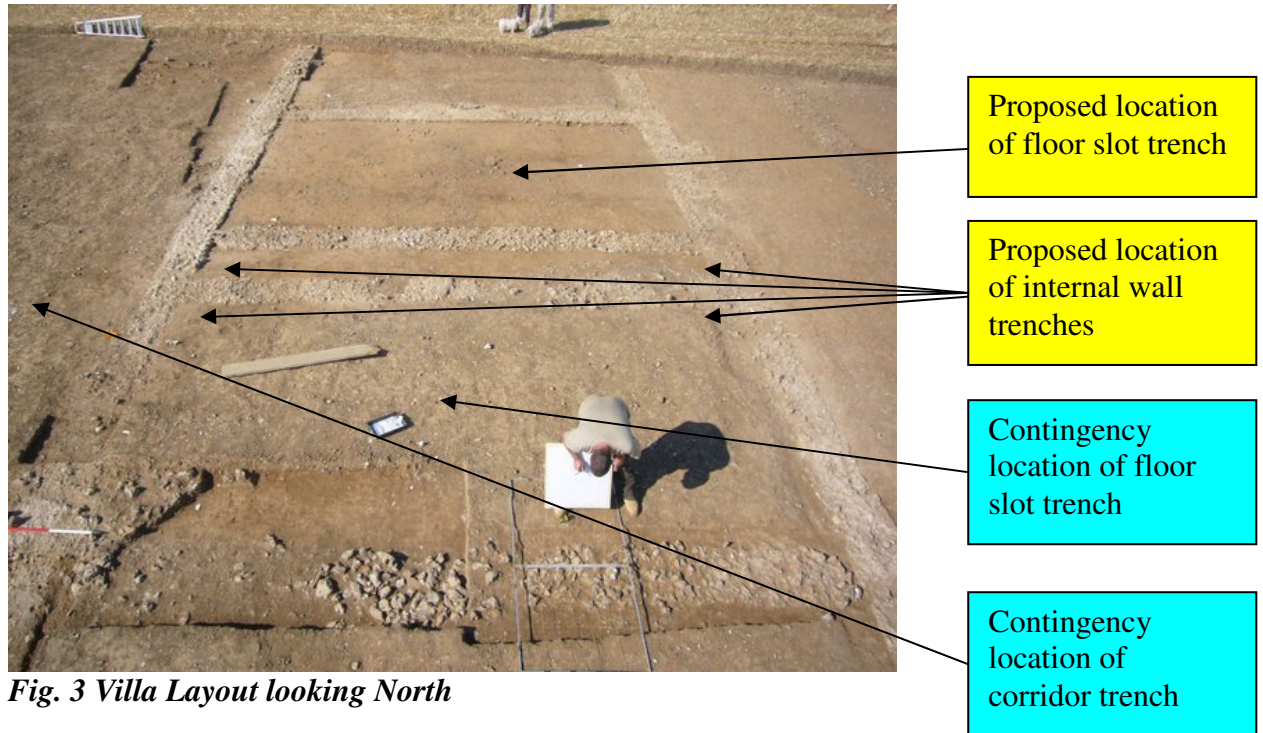


Fig.1 Site Location.



Fig. 2 Satellite Photo of Blacksmith's Corner



- Map Ref NGR SU05079750 and c. 10m OD.
- The geology of the area of the site is Aeolian 'Brickearth' deposits (mainly silts, in part contaminated with gravel).

3.2. Project background

WAS were first invited by Mr Luke Wishart to examine the field at Blacksmith's corner in 2006. When ploughing, a quantity of pottery had been found. Initial

excavation in August 2006 located a number of walls and a variety of roman finds. Excavation in 2007 revealed the floor plan of a large (30m long) corridor villa. The date range of the finds covers the period from the 1st century to the 4th century, and indicates that the villa was of high status.

Further excavation is now needed to try and understand the development of the villa.

3.3. Historical background

There are no mentions of previous roman finds from the HER in the immediate area. However, discussions with the previous owner of a local shop in 2007 provided information that metal detectorists have been visiting the site for some time, and that a large number of coins may have been removed without any proper recording.

4. Pre Excavation Methods Statement

4.1. Geophysics

A Geophysical was undertaken in 2006. The rooms and corridor of the villa are clearly visible.

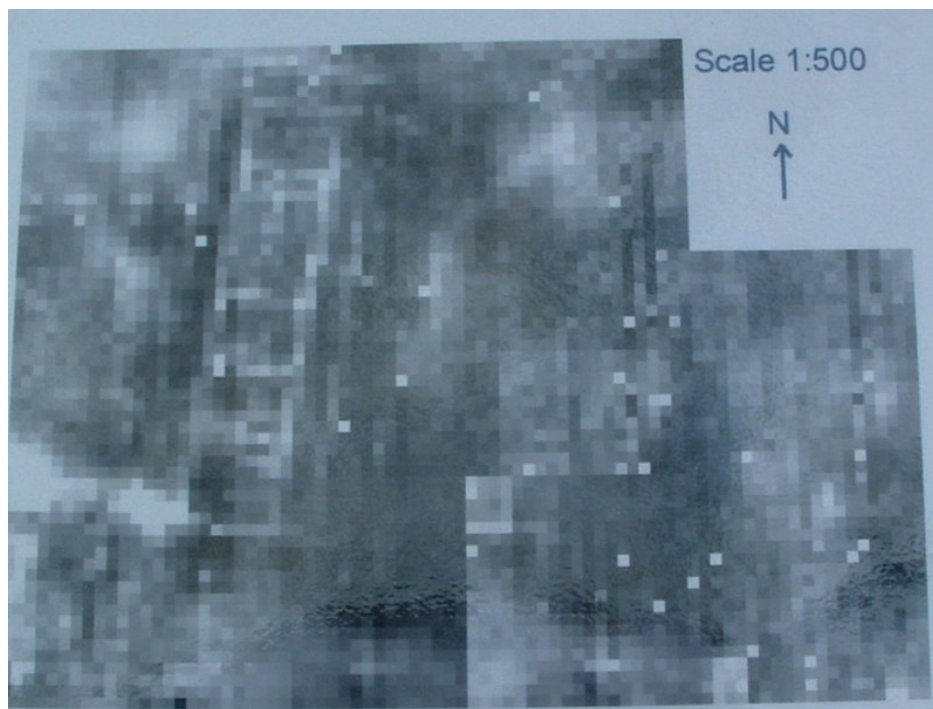


Fig. 5 – Geophysics Results

5. The Excavation Process

5.1. Permissions

- 5.1.1.** The owner of the field, Mr Luke Wishart, is continuing to support this project and have given permission to undertake survey and excavation on the land.

- 5.1.2.** It is proposed that the next excavations would take place in between 16 and 31 August 2008.

5.2. Excavation Procedure

- 5.2.1.** The excavation will be directed by Keith Bolton, using volunteers and members of WAS.
- 5.2.2.** Initially the trenches would be excavated by machine and piled with the ground immediately adjacent to trench. The trenches would only be left open for the minimum amount of time possible, and after recording would be backfilled by machine and the site tidied.
- 5.2.3.** The first excavation would be to dig a 1.5m wide trench running east to west across the centre of room 2 (which showed some evidence of having been reused as a corn dryer at some stage). The trench will be dug to the same depth as the main walls of the villa (approximately 0.83m below the top of the remaining wall). The trench is being located to try and determine if there are any previous floor layers under that which was exposed in 2007.
- 5.2.4.** Four 1.5m x 1.5m trenches would be located at each corner around the southernmost internal wall, which appears to be abutted to the main wall. The trenches at each corner are being located to try and understand the relationship of the walls, and to try and provide information about any possible sequencing of construction.
- 5.2.5.** A trench will be located over the apsidal wall to investigate the area of what is assumed to be a bath house. The trench will enable us to confirm that this was the use of this area of the villa.
- 5.2.6.** A further trench would be located at the possible stoke hole area adjacent to the apsidal wall.

5.3. Recording

- 5.3.1.** 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).
- 5.3.2.** 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.
- 5.3.3.** 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.

- 5.3.4.** Photographs will be taken using both a film camera and a digital camera as appropriate, using a suitable scale.

5.4. Artefact Sampling

- 5.4.1.** Artefacts will be retained where considered appropriate in the light of their context and/or importance.
- 5.4.2.** 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.
- 5.4.3.** All artefacts will be quantified by number and where appropriate weight.
- 5.4.4.** All artefacts, except those excluded on the grounds of size/material, will be washed and marked with the site code.
- 5.4.5.** 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.

5.5. Environmental Sampling

- 5.5.1.** Bulk environmental samples will be collected where this would contribute to fulfilling the aims of this project or suggest other meaningful results.
- 5.5.2.** Samples will be taken only from deposits that are well dated, or dateable from sealed contexts.
- 5.5.3.** Collected samples will be processed and assessed as advised by the District Archaeologist.

5.6. Archive

- 5.6.1.** The project archive will be prepared according to the standards set out in English Heritage's Management of Archaeological Projects.
- 5.6.2.** The project archive will be deposited with Worthing Museum, and copies will be deposited with the Collection Discovery centre at Fishbourne Roman Palace

5.7. Project Report

- 5.7.1.** A report will be written on the excavation detailing what was found with appropriate illustrations, analysing the remains in relation to the stated aims, according to the standards set out in English Heritage's

Management of Archaeological Projects.

- 5.7.2.** Copies of the report will be given to the District and County Archaeologists for consideration of inclusion on the HER, a copy to be kept in the records of WAS, and an abridged version to be published in the WAS newsletter. If anything of significance is found, an article would be submitted for inclusion in the Sussex Archaeological Collections.

5.8. Health and Safety

A health and safety risk assessment would be produced. 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.

Insurance for public liability and ‘employers’ liability will be taken out for the duration of the excavation, if not already covered by the existing WAS policy.

5.9. Funding

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.

