

Marches Archaeology

Haden Hill Park Rowley Regis Sandwell

Report on a programme of archaeological work (Appendix 12 to Mas 277)

April 2005

Marches Archaeology Series 375

This report is produced by

Marches Archaeology

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Surface reduced area 127

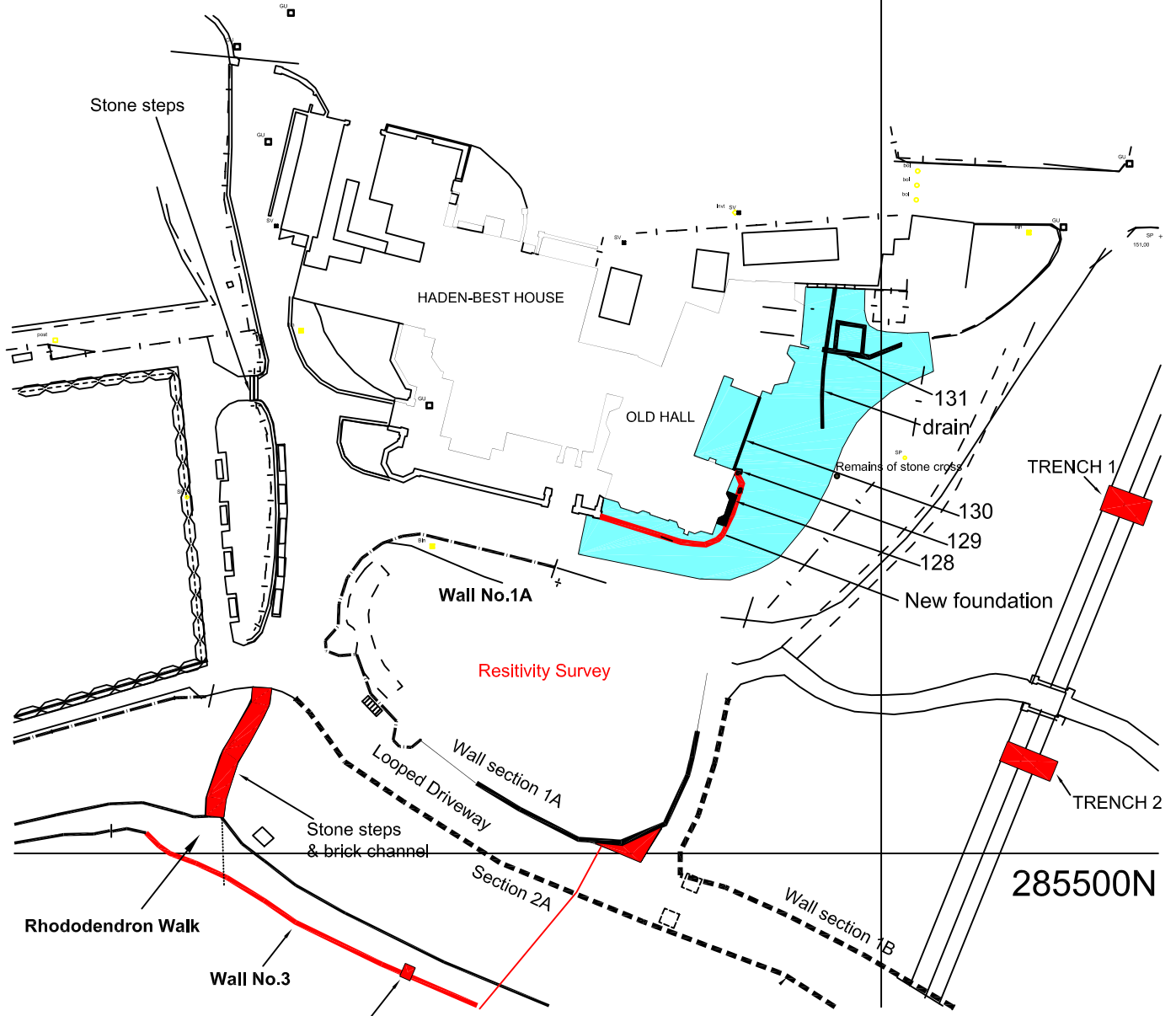


Fig. 1 Plan of the area around the Old Hall showing the area of the watching brief undertaken in March 2004

Appendix 12 to Mas 277

Haden Hill Park
Rowley Regis
Sandwell

Report on a programme of archaeological work

NGR: SJ 959 856

by
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April 2005

Summary

In March 2004 Marches Archaeology returned to Haden Hill Park to observe the excavation of groundworks around the Old Hall.

An area around the hall was reduced and a foundation trench for a new flower bed wall was excavated. Outbuildings and wall foundations associated with the 18th or 19th century additions to the Old Hall were revealed.

12.1 Introduction

Haden Hill Park is situated in Cradley Heath (NGR: SJ 959 856) and consists of formal parkland, woodland and water features set in 28 ha. Within the park are Haden Hill House and Hall, which are registered on the local Sites and Monuments Record and are Listed Buildings. Sandwell Council with funding from a Heritage Lottery award wish to restore the estate to its former Victorian glory. Therefore, certain elements within the restoration programme required archaeological supervision.

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (the client) commissioned Marches Archaeology during Contract 4 of the programme of restoration works in 2002-3. A full report of that work was produced in March 2003 (MAS 277) and this appendix forms a continuation of that report. This appendix should be read in conjunction with that report.

In March 2004 Marches Archaeology were commissioned to provide further archaeological services as part of that continuing contract. The scheme of works was based on the previous projects proposals and Briefs written and approved by the local Archaeological Advisor.

12.2 Scope and aims of the project

The supplementary work is part of contract 4b and consisted of surface reduction around the Old Hall and the excavation of a new trench for the foundation of a new flower bed wall (Fig. 1).

The area around the Old Hall was considered by the draft Conservation Statement to be within the highest (red) zone of archaeological sensitivity (Morriss, 2002). It was therefore considered that there was a high potential for surviving archaeology. The Borough Archaeological Advisor required a watching brief while Sandwell County Council's appointed contractor undertook the groundworks.

The Institute of Field Archaeologists defines the purpose of an archaeological watching brief as:

‘to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works’

and:

‘to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard’.

12.3 Methodology

12.3.1 The fieldwork

The recording system includes written, drawn and photographic data. Context numbers were allocated and context record sheets completed. Plans were drawn showing the location of the trenches with detail plans of archaeological features drawn at 1:20, sections were drawn at 1:10 or 1:20. The photographic record consists of black and white negative and colour transparency film.

12.3.2 Office work

On completion of fieldwork a site archive was prepared. The written, drawn and photographic data was catalogued and cross-referenced and a summary produced. The artefactual data was processed, catalogued and cross-referenced.

12.4 The watching brief

The surface reduction around the Old Hall revealed the brick foundations of a square bay window [128] set centrally to the East Gable (Fig. 1). The foundation was 3.23m wide and projected from the main structure 1.03m. The foundation was damaged and built upon when the Old Hall was rebuilt in the 1980s (Morriss, 2002, 21). A photograph in the Haden Hill House collection shows the square window bay was built on this foundation. The foundation may date to either to the end of the 19th century or to around 1934 when Rowley Regis Council rebuilt the canted bay (Morriss, 2002, 22).

The north-east corner of the East Gable was constructed on the remains of a brick feature [129] (Fig. 1). The feature consisted of a brick wall, 1.33m x 0.71m, constructed by machine-made bricks. It did not seem to have a particular structural purpose especially as it was angled severely away the building and may be no more than a lump of demolished masonry. A drain from the 1980s construction had truncated the east end of the feature but why the west end of the brick feature was incorporated into the corner of gable wall was not determined.

A brick wall foundation was found in between the recess between the wings on the east side of the Old Hall [130] (Fig. 1). The foundation was 0.22m wide and was constructed from machine-manufactured bricks. Early 20th century photographs show that the foundation supported a two storey 'loggia'. This was a brick range consisting of a pair of broad openings with a moulded lintel, supporting a tall first floor section with a single large window under a plain pitched roof (Morriss, 2002, 18). Morriss interprets that this range could have been late 18th century or early 19th century (Morriss, 2002, 18). The 'loggia' was present in 1922 when the Hall was taken over by Rowley Regis Council but was presumably demolished in 1934 as part of the remedial works (Morriss, 2002, 19).

The foundations for a brick outhouse and wall were found in the north-east corner of the surface stripped area not far from the standing dovecote [131] (Fig. 1). The foundations for three walls of the outbuilding were 0.26m wide while the south wall where it formed part of the building was 0.35m wide. The continuation of the wall was 0.26m wide and there was a 1.34m wide gap in between the outbuilding and the Old Hall, presumably an entranceway. The outbuilding is shown on the 1st edition Ordnance survey plan of 1888. It is no longer present on the 1945 plan of the site so may have been demolished as part of the 1934 remedial works.

Running roughly north south was a brick formed drain, similar to those previously seen at Haden Hill Park (Fig. 1). The wall foundation [131] had cut through the drain. The drain is likely to date to either to the 19th or late 18th century.

Above these was mixed pale yellow sand with patches of gravel and redeposited clay [127]. The layer contained lots of brick and building debris which suggests that the layer was disturbed by the reconstruction of the Old Hall in the 1980s. The foundation trench

for the new flower bed was not of sufficient depth to penetrate through to the layers below.

During the surface reduction a 1.9m by 0.6m wide leadless glazed ceramic slab with a groove at one end to allow drainage was uncovered. The artefact was tentatively interpreted as either as a work surface. It has also been suggested that it may be a mortician's slab, was labelled as being manufactured by Doulton & Co. Ltd, Sanitary Engineers, Lambeth, London and Paisley. The relationship, if any, to the Old Hall was not established. The artefact may have come from the Hall and was taken out in the 1980s or it may have come from somewhere else in the borough and was simply deposited on the site.

12.5 Discussion and conclusion

The surface reduction revealed elements of the Old Hall complex that were demolished in the 19th century. The structural elements revealed were all structures already testified within the historic record. The 'loggia' was shown on Ordnance Survey plans from 1888 through to 1922 and on early photographs held in the Haden-Best House collection. The square bay window is clearly shown on early photographs but is not apparent on the Ordnance Survey maps until and including the 1922 edition. The outbuilding is shown on these maps but no photographs are known to survive of this structure.

The surface stripping around the south and east of the Old Hall revealed that the area was heavily disturbed, probably during the Old Hall's rebuilding in the 1980s. An 18th or 19th century brick drain had survived this process but there was no indication of any earlier features. Though no early features were encountered at the levels penetrated by the contractors it is possible that the area has some surviving archaeology at a lower level. However, though potentially the area may have surviving archaeology it probably does not warrant its status within a red zone. The area probably should be more appropriately considered, with the rest of the general area around the house, as an orange zone.

12.6 The archive

Marches Archaeology currently holds the archive for Appendix 12 that awaits transfer to an approved repository. It is intended to deposit the archive with Wednesbury Museum.

The site archive consists of:

- 1 context index sheet
- 5 context sheets
- 1 sheets of site drawings
- 1 photographic index sheets
- 1 film black and white photographic negatives
- 1 film colour photographic slides
- 1 computer disk [IBM]

This appendix