



**Report on a Programme of Archaeological Works at
Pitlands Farm, Up Marden, West Sussex**

March 2019

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This document sets out the results from a programme of archaeological works carried out by West Sussex Archaeology Ltd on behalf of the owner at Pitlands Farm, Up Marden, West Sussex. The works were carried out in February 2019 in order to evaluate two areas, one for a new summer house, and the other for an access track to an existing ancillary building, to inform applications for Scheduled Monument Consent.

Pitlands Farm overlies the remains of a substantial Roman bath house and other associated structures forming part of a presumed villa complex, which is a Scheduled Monument (No.1015235). The northern trench, that over the site of the summer house, revealed a north-south running ditch and a series of pits, all of medieval date. The south trench, in the area of the access track, revealed just one east-west running ditch, probably again of medieval date.

BACKGROUND

Topographical Background

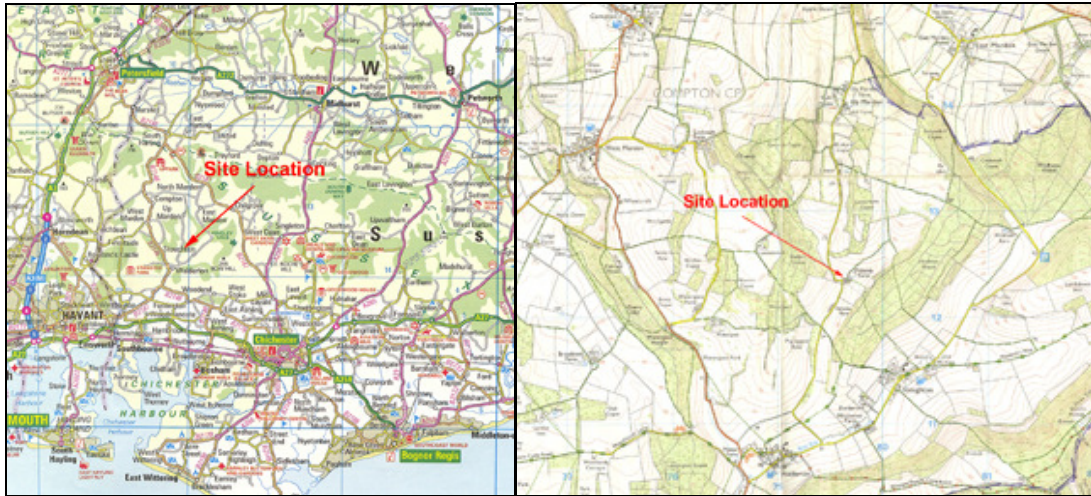


Figure 1 Site location. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. License number: AL100036068

1. Pitlands Farm lies 10km to the north-west of Chichester in the parish of Compton, West Sussex, at 60m aOD, OS grid reference SU 7967 1235. Geologically the site lies on the Newhaven chalk formation.

Project Background

1. Excavations at Pitlands Farm undertaken in the 1960's and 1990's uncovered the remains of a substantial second century Roman bath house and associated aisled building. The site, including the area of the current Farmhouse, was subsequently designated a Scheduled Monument (No.1015235).
2. Mr. P. Huxham, is looking to construct a new summer house to the rear of the current farmhouse, in an area currently occupied by solar panelling. In addition he is seeking to provide a new access track for an existing building lying to the east of the farm. The sites of both these proposals lie either partially or wholly within the Scheduled area. (see Fig.2). In order to determine whether remains associated with the presumed villa complex, or any other archaeological remains, exist within the footprint of this extension, Mr. Huxham commissioned West Sussex Archaeology Ltd to carry out an archaeological investigation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSA 2018) agreed with Historic England.
3. This report details the results of that archaeological work, which was carried out from the 4th – 7th February 2019 by George Anelay of West Sussex Archaeology Ltd, and accompanies and informs the application for Scheduled Monument Consent for the full works.

Historical Background

1. The presence of Roman remains at Pitlands Farm was first noted by the wife of the then landowner in the garden to the rear of the current farmhouse. This led to a series of archaeological excavations carried out between 1965 and 1969 under the supervision of Roy & Sheila Morgan and overall direction of Alec Down (Down 1979). The main trench was positioned over what proved to be a substantial bath building running east-west, to the immediate north-east of the farmhouse, together with traces of an adjoining wall, yard surface and well. Further small-scale trenching was located to the north which revealed two more stretches of wall foundation, which were interpreted as the remains of further buildings, and an undated gully with an associated line of post-holes. The excavated pottery suggested a date range for the villa as a whole from Flavian to the fourth century AD. An alteration to the bath house was dated to some time after the late third century AD. The superior size and construction of the excavated bath house suggested to the excavators that the villa was of greater size and importance than others in the area. Late Saxon and medieval pottery was also found within the trenches, suggesting later occupation on the site. The current farmhouse is 17th century in origin.
2. Further excavations were undertaken in 1992 and 1993 by the Chichester District Archaeological Unit, again under the direction of Alec Down. The purpose of this project was to re-excavate parts of the bath house in order to refine its dating and to investigate a possible building seen as a parch marks in a field to the west. The bath building was dated to the early second century AD on the basis of the *in situ* relief patterned flue tiles. It was suggested that this villa is another example of the early development of masonry villas along the south coast of Sussex (Down 1992). The structure revealed by the parch marks proved to be an aisled building, aligned north-south, divided into at least six rooms and dating to the same period as bath building to the east. Further late Saxon and medieval pottery was recovered from pits cutting the Roman remains. A resistivity survey to the north, while recording some anomalies, failed to reveal anything consistent with any further buildings (Down 1993).
3. Fifteen years later, an archaeological watching brief was carried out by West Sussex Archaeology Ltd at Pitlands Farm in two phases from 30th January – 13th March 2008 and 10th November 2010 – 18th January 2011. The watching brief was in response to a condition of a planning permission for the re-development of some of the farm buildings which lie to the south of the present farm house, including the southern part of the Meal Shed. The principal result of this archaeological work was to demonstrate that no remains associated with the villa lie under the southern part of the modern farm courtyard. Only two significant archaeological features were found, both pits of uncertain date. In addition a number of unstratified Roman artefacts were recovered; of particular note were two fragments of a Bembridge Limestone slab,

possibly originally from a monumental Roman building, but re-used as a rainwater drain (Anelay 2011).

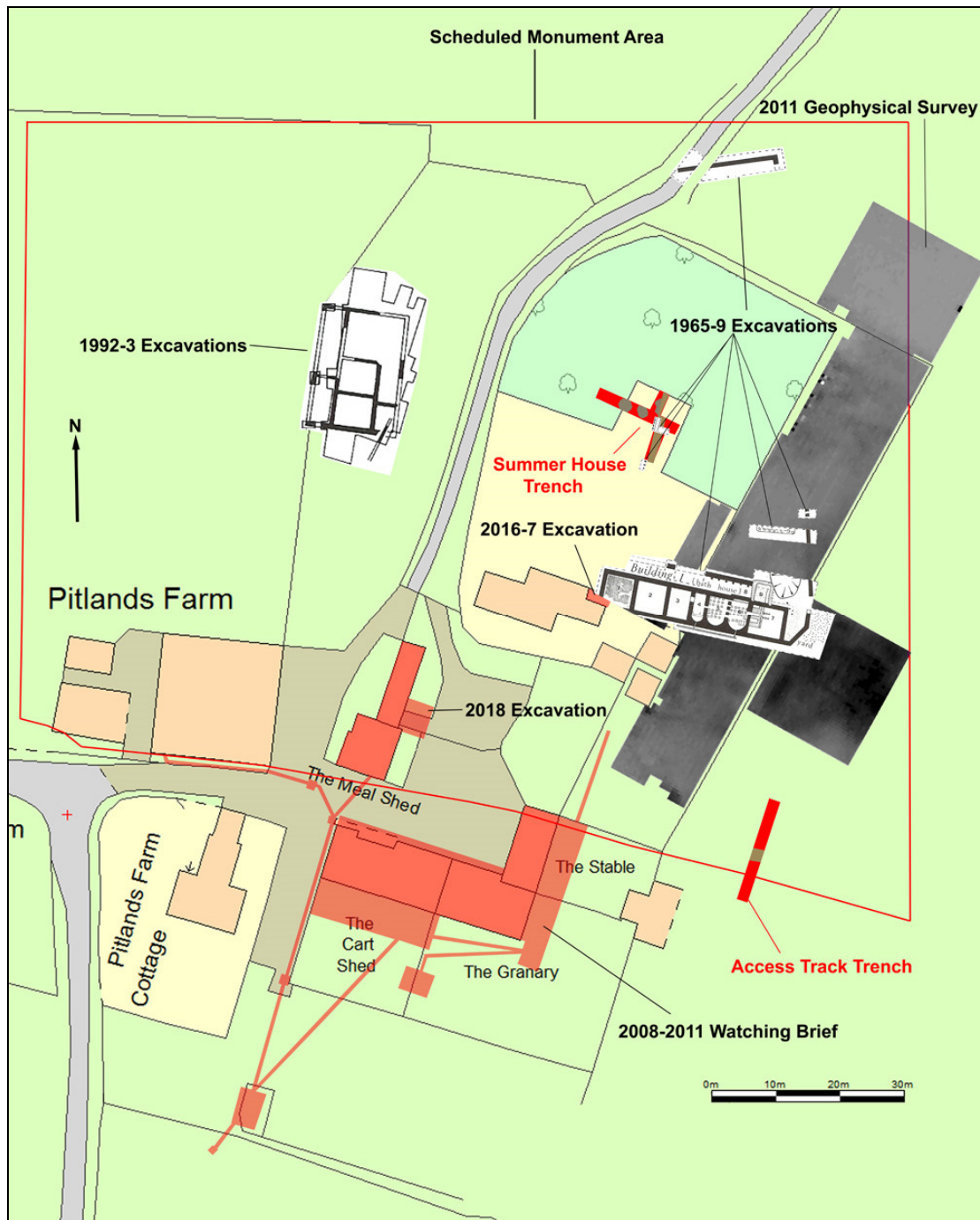


Figure 2 Pitlands Farm showing all the previous archaeological work and the location of the 2019 trenches

4. In July 2011 a geophysical survey was carried out by volunteers under the direction of Neville Haskins. While the magnetometer survey proved ineffective, probably due to the geological conditions on the site, a resistivity survey not only confirmed the position of the bathhouse found by the earlier excavations, but also demonstrated that other structures exist beyond the 1960's excavations to the east.

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Fainter anomalies also suggest further structures may exist to the south and north of the bath house (Haskins 2011).

5. Further archaeological works were carried out by West Sussex Archaeology in 2016 & 2017 in an area to the immediate east of the current farmhouse. This revealed that any Roman remains associated with the bathhouse thought to extend into this location, had been truncated below the surface of the geology, possibly in the 18th or 19th century, although a ditch profile was observed in the north face of the trench (Anelay 2017). Finally an archaeological evaluation was undertaken in 2018 to the east of the Meal Shed, under the west side of the current farmyard. This revealed that the area had been truncated to the surface of the geology, possibly when the current farmyard was formed (Anelay 2018).
6. In spite of all the archaeological excavations that have taken place at Pitlands Farm over the course of the last fifty years, the overall layout of the Roman villa, which undoubtedly exists there, is still uncertain. The proposed area for the access track lies at the southern boundary of the scheduled area, c.35m to the south of the bath house, at a point where the topography drops down to the north. It is not clear whether this drop is a natural phenomenon or man-made. If the latter, it possibly marks the line of an historic boundary, although Down consider all the visible lynchets on the site to be post-Roman (Down 1979, p.106). The proposed area for the summer house lies c.30m to the north of the bath house, within what Down interpreted as the stockyard of the villa (*ibid.*, p.104), and has a slight slope to the north. The 1965-9 excavations included a small trench positioned on its eastern edge, within which was a small gully accompanied by a line of post-holes to the west. These were undated, although Down suggested they may not be Roman (*ibid.*, p.101).

RESULTS

Summer House Trench

1. The trench positioned over the proposed summer house was 13.6m long and 1.5m wide. It had two extensions, that to the south being 5.6m long and 1.5m wide, while that to the north was 3.5m long and 1.5m wide. The position of the overall trench was adjusted in order to avoid existing services.



Figure 3 The summer house trench looking south, along Ditch [18]

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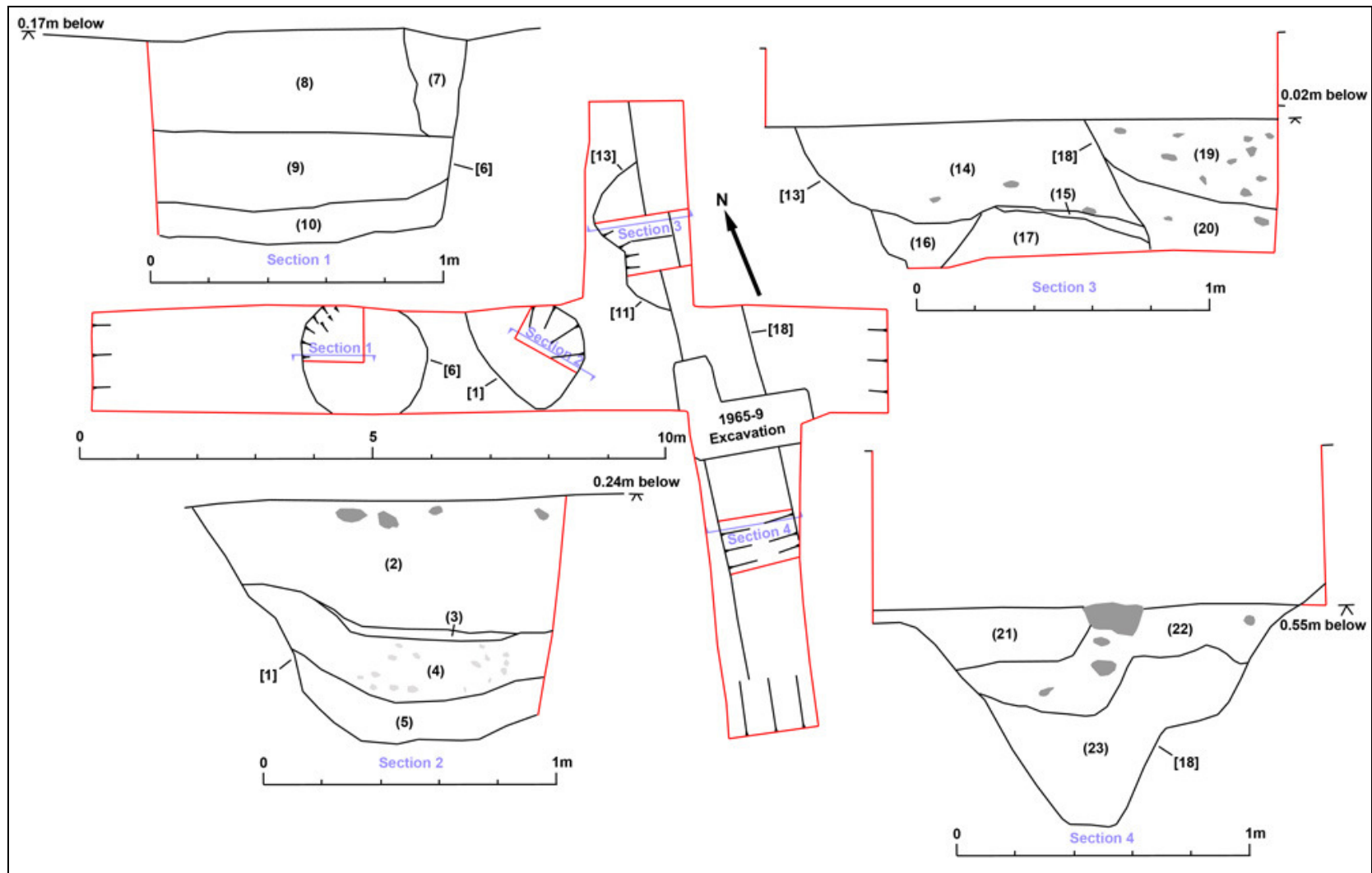


Figure 4 Summer House Trench plan and sections. The levels are marking height below the pool patio (see p.15 para.3)

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2. A ditch [18] was revealed towards the eastern end of the trench, running approximately north-south. Two sections were cut across it, that to the south recording its full dimensions. It was 1.3m wide and 0.7m deep, with three layers of fill material: the lowest (23) was a red/brown clay silt, with occasional flints; above this was a darker brown clay silt (22) containing more frequent and larger flints; along its west side this upper soil formed a much darker coloured layer (21), with occasional charcoal, as well as large flints. These two upper fills contained: two sherds (53g) of High Medieval coarse sandy ware and one sherd (20g) of abraded early medieval chalk-tempered pottery; two fragments (9g) of animal bone (one being a pig's tusk); two fragments (183g) of Horsham stone (probably roofing material); four fragments (123g) of Upper Greensand (probably building stone); one Roman *imbrex* tile fragment (44g); one Roman comb pattern box flue tile (82g); two unidentified Roman tile fragments (@ 30g); and 20 oyster shells (@212g).



Figure 5 The summer house trench looking north, along Ditch [18]

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3. The northern section cut across Ditch [18] did not span its full width, and was not excavated to its base. That part exposed consisted of two fills, a lower of mid-dark brown clay silt (20) with occasional chalk and flint, and an upper of red/brown clay silt (19) with much more frequent flints. This upper fill (19) contained: two sherds (22g) of West Sussex chalk tempered High Medieval coarseware; one sherd (29g) of early medieval mixed gritty coarseware; three sherds (126g) of residual Roman pottery; three fragments (82g) of Horsham stone; one fragment of residual Roman *imbrex* tile (31g); two fragments of residual unidentified Roman tile (3g); one unidentified tile (13g); and a Neolithic or Bronze Age flint scraper (57g).
4. Ditch [18] is likely to be a medieval boundary ditch which has filled with material containing not only contemporary artefacts, but also those associated with the earlier Roman villa. The presence of two sherds of early medieval pottery, while abraded, would suggest an earlier presence on the site as well.
5. Two intercutting pits [11 & 13] were found partially disturbed by the later Ditch [18]. These were not fully excavated, although their diameters would both appear to have been broadly similar at c.1.5m. The northern, Pit [13], would appear to cut the southern, Pit [11], which was only 0.45m deep (Pit 13 was not bottomed). Pit [11] was filled with a mid-brown clay silt containing frequent chalk and flints. Pit [13] was filled with at least four layers, the lowest of which was a mid-dark brown clay silt (17) with frequent chalk, above which was a thin layer of mortar and degraded *opus signinum* (15), containing three 3rd century Roman radiate coins, and a layer of chalk rubble (16) against the pit side. Capping these was a layer of mid-brown clay silt (14) with frequent chalk and flint, and containing: one sherd of West Sussex chalk-tempered High Medieval coarseware (36g); four sherds of High Medieval coarse sandy ware (48g); one sherd of High Medieval flint-tempered coarseware (10g); one sherd of early medieval mixed gritty coarseware (16g); one fragment of Horsham stone (9g); one residual fragment of Roman *tegula* (108g); four fragments of animal bone (52g); and one oyster shell (28g).
6. To the west of these features, two further isolated pits were revealed [1 & 6]. Pit [1] was oval in shape, c.1.5m x c.2m, and c.0.8m deep. It contained four layers of fill: at the base was red/brown clay (5), probably eroded from the sides soon after its initial excavation; above was a red/brown clay silt (4), with abundant chalk rubble and frequent flints, containing three sherds of High Medieval sandy coarseware (50g), one sherd of West Sussex chalk-tempered coarseware (4g) and an oyster shell (13g); laying over this was a thin spread of burnt material (3), possibly the contents of a hearth or fire, containing frequent charcoal and two sherds of High Medieval sandy coarseware (16g), a fragment of burnt animal bone (6g) and three unburnt oyster shells (30g); capping all these layers was a mid-brown clay silt (2) with frequent chalk and flint, containing: 13 sherds of West Sussex chalk

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tempered High Medieval coarseware (230g); one sherd of High Medieval sandy coarse ware (16g); one sherd of Late Saxon Portchester ware (30g); one sherd of residual Roman pottery (5g); two fragments of Horsham Stone (223g); six fragments of animal bone (73g); and four oyster shells (38g).



Figure 6 Pits [11 & 13], looking north



Figure 7 The summer house trench looking south-west across Pits [1 & 6]



Figure 8 Pit [1], looking south-west

- Pit [6] was roughly circular, c.2m in diameter, and c. 0.7m deep. It was again filled with four layers: at the base was a fill of chalk rubble (10), containing one sherd of early medieval mixed gritty coarseware (44g), two sherds of West Sussex chalk-tempered High Medieval coarseware (43g), eight sherds of High Medieval coarse sandy ware (103g), three sherds of residual Roman pottery (49g), three fragments (33g) of animal bone (including one pig tusk) and four oyster shells (101g); the central layer was composed of a smooth mid-brown silt (9) with occasional flints, containing nine sherds of West Sussex chalk-tempered High Medieval coarseware (206g), four sherds of High Medieval coarse sandy ware (42g), 16 sherds of High Medieval flint tempered coarseware (264g), three sherds of residual Roman pottery (108g), a residual fragment of Roman *tegula* tile (121g), a fragment of residual Roman *opus sectile* in a grey and white marble (77g), seven fragments of animal bone (123g), and eight oyster shells (118g); above this layer was one of black/brown clay silt (8) with frequent flints and charcoal fragments, and containing four sherds of West Sussex chalk-tempered High Medieval coarseware (51g); two sherds of High Medieval sandy coarse ware (21g); a fragment of a medieval floor tile (345g); three sherds of residual Roman pottery (50g); one fragments of residual unidentified Roman tile (21g); three fragments of animal bone (26g); and a large assemblage of 79 oyster shells (2033g). A small deposit of chalk rubble (7) around the perimeter of the pit probably relates to the collapse of the unstable sides, or the actions of a burrowing animal.



Figure 9 Pit [6], looking south-east

8. These four pits [1, 6, 11 & 13] would appear to all be of medieval date, with two at least pre-dating the north-south ditch [18]. It is probable that they were originally excavated as chalk extraction pits, possibly for small-scale domestic use, such as panel infilling or the formation of ovens, rather than for agricultural purposes. Once empty, they may well have stood open for some time, before being infilled with soil containing a relatively high degree of domestic waste and other older residual artefacts. Once again the presence of early medieval sherds suggests occupation of that date. The fragment of *opus sectile* marble provides another indication of the status of the earlier Roman villa.
9. The discovery of the “L” shaped trench cut into the top of the north-south ditch [18] is a useful confirmation of the location of one of the excavations from the 1960’s work on the site. The present works had the advantage over these previous investigations of exposing a larger area, with more of the ditch now revealed, proving it to be somewhat larger than the “gully” noted back then. No sign of the line of post-holes to the west of this “gully” was seen, and perhaps this represents an error in interpretation and recording.

Access Trench

1. The trench positioned over the proposed access track was 16.5m long and 1.5m wide. Throughout this trench, there was c.0.3m of modern dark brown ploughsoil, above c.0.25m of mid-brown historic ploughsoil, containing frequent large flints, particularly over Ditch [24]. This ditch was 1.9m wide and 0.65m deep, and was filled with a mid-brown clay

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silt containing occasional small-to medium flints. The ditch fill (25) contained 17 sherds (385g) of a High Medieval sandy-ware glazed jug and one sherd (6g) of a High Medieval flint-tempered coarseware pot, together within four fragments of residual Roman tile (145g).

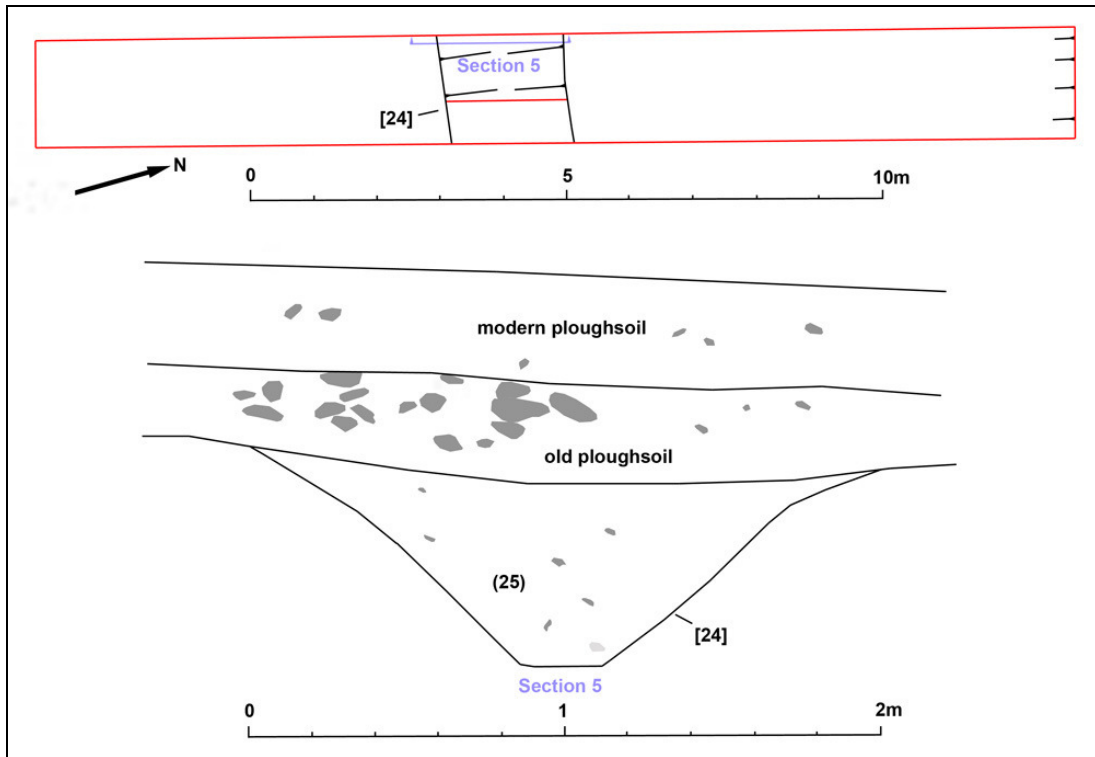


Figure 10 Access Track Trench plan and section.



Figure 11 Ditch [24], looking west

2. The ditch located in the Access Trench is likely to be of medieval origin, but appears to have remained as a boundary marker, according to historic Ordnance Survey mapping, until the late 20th century.

CONCLUSION

1. The trench excavated over the location of the proposed summer house revealed a north-south running boundary ditch, and a series of four probable chalk extraction pits. All would appear to be of medieval date, with the ditch later within this period than at least two of the pits. The quantity and unabraded nature of the medieval assemblage would suggest that a medieval dwelling is located nearby, probably the predecessor of the current 17th century farmhouse. A small quantity of early medieval pottery would indicate that such a farmstead might also have earlier antecedents. No trace was found of any *in situ* Roman remains associated with the known bathhouse, although a small assemblage of residual artefacts dating to this period was recovered from within the later ditch and pits. The presumed principal villa building is thought to lie further to the west.
2. The medieval ditches [18 & 24] found in both trenches during these works were of a similar nature and fill, as was one found in the 2017 watching brief at the east end of the existing farmhouse, suggesting that together they represent two sides of a possible enclosure lying to the north and east of the current farm. This enclosure may well have surrounded the suggested medieval farmstead, possibly lying partially above the ruins of the Roman villa. The southern arm of the enclosure ditch would appear to have remained a field boundary until the late 20th century, with a track leading from its south-eastern corner to the church and village of Stoughton to the south-east. The absence of this ditch on the plans of the 1960's bathhouse excavations probably indicates that it runs immediately past the western end of the bathhouse.
3. The proposed works associated with the summer house will involve the excavation of the platform upon which it will sit, with its finished floor to be at the same level as the surface of the existing patio around the nearby swimming pool, upon a c.0.2m thick base. The archaeological features detailed above lie c.0.25m below the ground surface, protected under a layer of topsoil. However, the ground rises gently from the patio to the site of the proposed summer house, to the extent that in the latter's northern and western parts, the cutting of the required platform will involve the removal of the upper levels of any archaeological features that exist within its footprint. This will be by up to c.0.25m at its northern limit, and up to c.0.1m at its western limit, tapering to zero over the position of Pits [1 & 11], as the ground falls to the south-east,. It is considered that this is a minor and acceptable loss, but which, will however be monitored, excavated and recorded by a suitably qualified archaeologist.

4. This evaluation has demonstrated that it is unlikely that any archaeological remains exist within the footprint of the proposed access track, aside from Ditch [24], and this will remain undisturbed, since it is intended that the ground be reduced to no lower than the surface of the chalk. Nevertheless it is proposed that the groundworks are monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist, with the line of the ditch recorded where it passes through the affected area.

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