



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

April 2018

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 April 2018 in order to evaluate an area to the east of the Meal Shed to inform an application for an extension to the property.

To the north of the area to be investigated lie the remains of a substantial Roman bath house, which is a Scheduled Monument (No.1015235). The results of these archaeological works indicate that the area of the extension has been largely truncated to the surface of the geology, possibly when the current farmyard was formed.

BACKGROUND

Topographical Background

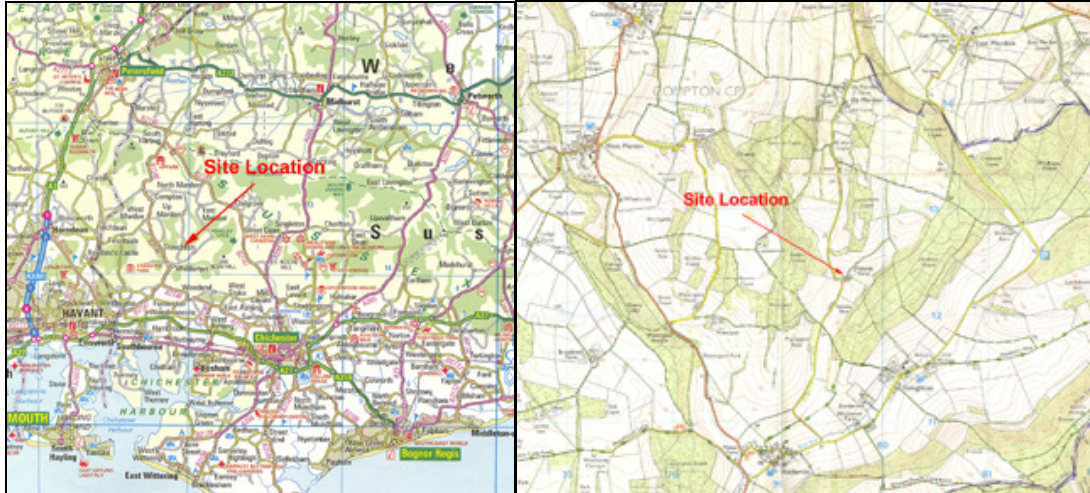


Figure 1 Site location. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. License number: AL100036068

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 build an extension onto the east side of the existing Meal Shed at Pitlands Farm, in an area to the south of the known Roman bath house and associated structures. (see Fig.3). 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.
1. This report details the results of that archaeological work, which was carried out on the 3rd April 2018 by George Anelay of West Sussex Archaeology Ltd.

Historical Background

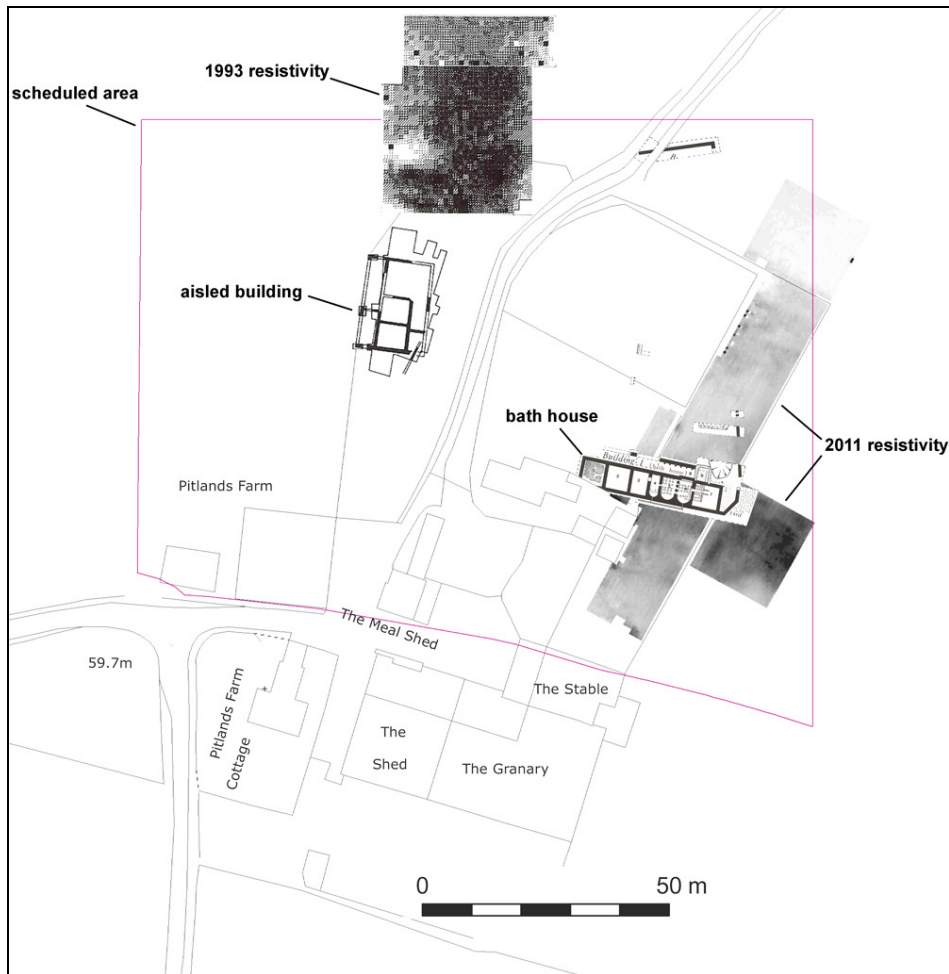


Figure 2 Plan of known archaeological features and the geophysical surveys. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. License number: AL100036068

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.

WEST SUSSEX ARCHÆOLOGY

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. 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 farmyard. 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).
4. In July 2011 a geophysical survey was carried out by volunteers under the direction of Neville Haskins. This 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. Fainter anomalies also suggest further structures may exist to the south and north of the bath house (Haskins 2011). 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 (Anelay 2017).
5. 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 geophysical survey undertaken in 2011 suggested that substantial remains exist to the east of the known bath house, potentially extending beyond the limits of the current scheduled area.

RESULTS

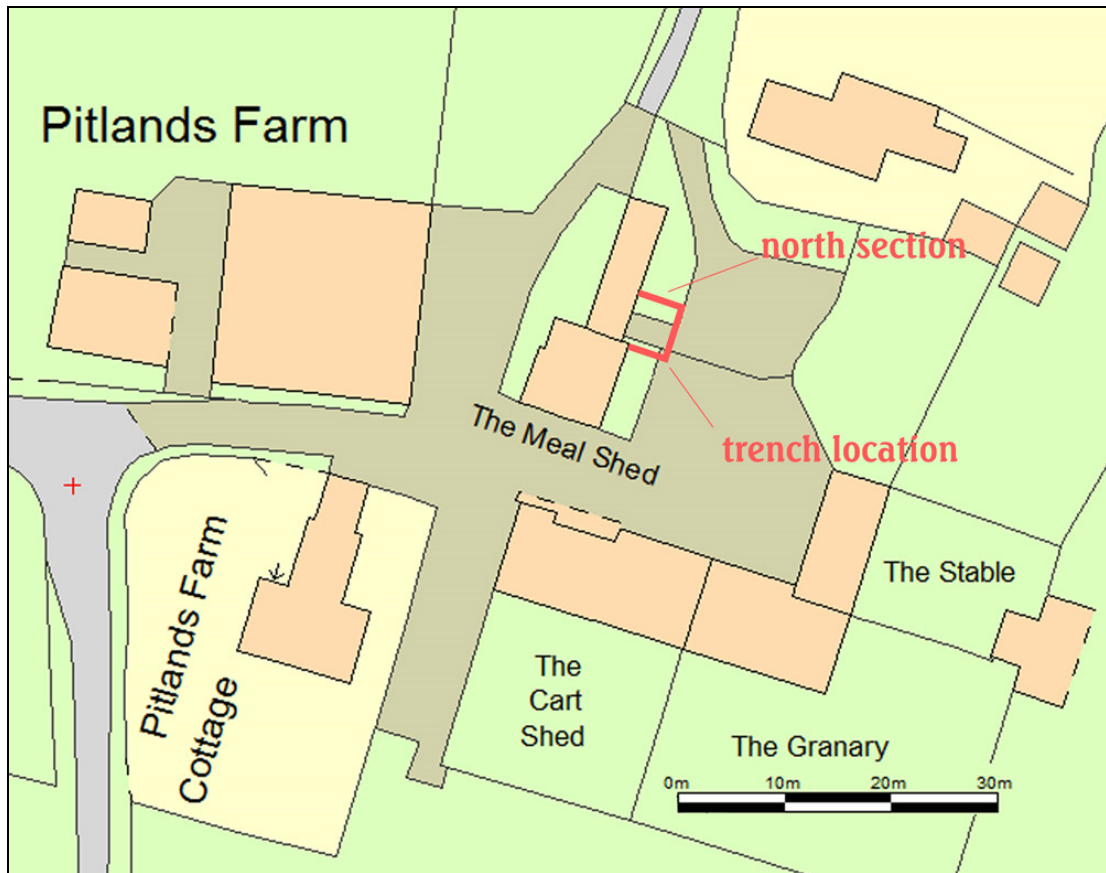


Figure 3 Plan showing the area of the excavated trench. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. License number: AL100036068



Figure 4 The excavated trench, looking south-west

WEST SUSSEX ARCHÆOLOGY

1. It had initially been planned to excavate a trench covering the entire footprint of the proposed extension, but the decision was taken that the existing concrete yard surface would be retained under its floor, with only the foundation trench for its walls cutting through to the layers below. In the light of this, the evaluation trench encompassed the whole footprint of this foundation trench (see Fig. 3).
2. Within the southern and eastern arms of the foundation trench the modern concrete yard surface was found to sit directly upon the underlying clay-with-flints geology. The northern arm lay just beyond the limit of this concrete, and here the upper layer was instead composed of a loose dark grey/brown topsoil, containing frequent unworked flints.

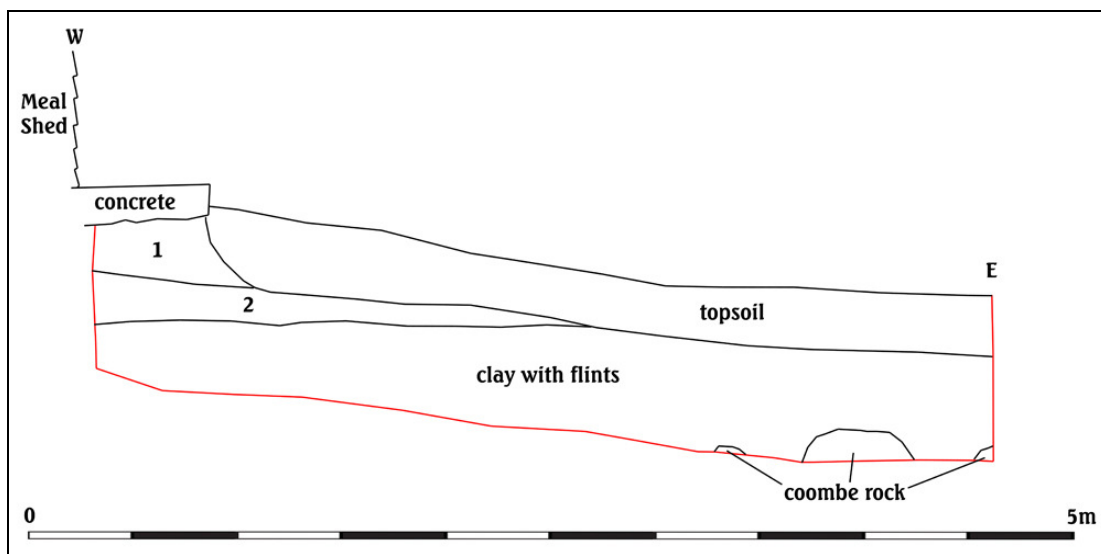


Figure 5 The north section of evaluation trench



Figure 6 The north section of evaluation trench, looking north

3. Only at the western end of the northern arm of the foundation trench were additional layers recorded. Above the natural clay-with-flints was a deposit of mid grey/brown silt (No.2 in Fig.5), up to c.0.25m thick, containing frequent flints. This was overlain by a layer of mid grey/brown silt (No.1 in Fig.5), up to c.0.3m thick, containing frequent fragments of chalk and flints. Both these layers sloped away to the east, suggesting that they have been truncated. No artefacts were recovered from either of these layers.

CONCLUSION

1. The results from the evaluation trench clearly indicate that there are no surviving Roman features or deposits within the area of the proposed extension. The lack of any buried soil beneath the modern concrete would suggest that there has been a certain amount of truncation, possible associated with the laying of the current yard surface. However the nature of the layers at the western end of the northern arm of the foundation trench indicates that such truncation is more widespread, possibly encompassing the entire area of the yard formed by the existing buildings. This might explain the lack of any Roman artefacts recovered, save for one modest fragment of brick in the topsoil.
2. The archaeological works carried out at Pitlands Farm since 2008 would seem to indicate that few Roman features exist to the south of the current farmhouse, either because the villa never extended in this direction, or because they have been destroyed by the medieval and later occupation of the site. At present the main focus for Roman activity is believed to lie to the north and east of the farmhouse.

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