



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

September 2016

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 August & September 2016 in order to evaluate an area to the north-east of the Farmhouse to inform a possible application for an extension to the property.

Immediately to the north of the area to be investigated lies the remains of a substantial Roman bath house, which is a Scheduled Monument (No.1015235). The results indicated that the area of the extension has been truncated below the level of any Roman remains, possibly in the 18th or 19th century.

BACKGROUND

Topographical Background

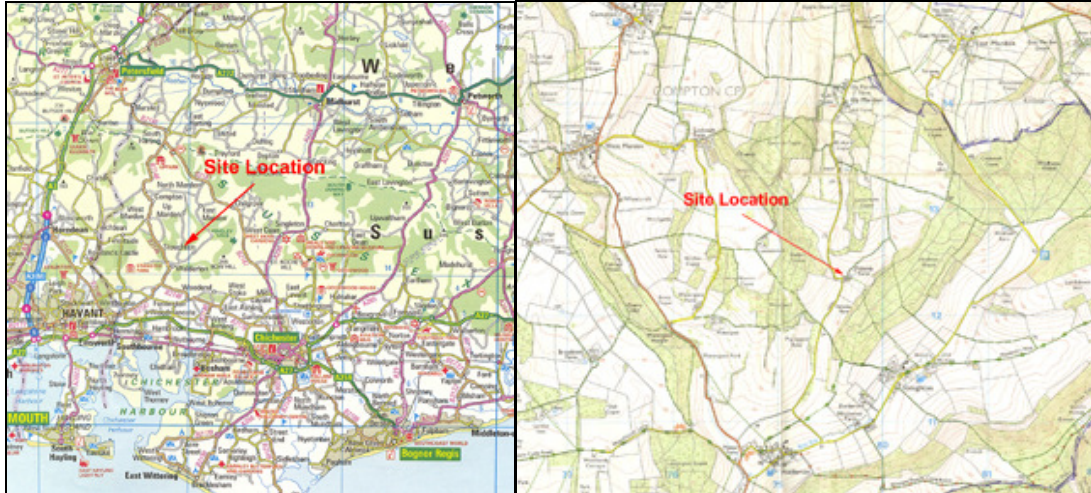


Figure 1 Site location. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. License number: AL100036068

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. A. Huxham, is looking to build an extension off the north-east corner of the existing Farmhouse at Pitlands Farm, in an area immediately to the south of the known Roman bath house (see Fig.3). In order to determine whether remains associated with this bath house, or any other archaeological remains, exist within the currently proposed 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 2106) agreed with Historic England.
1. This report details the results of that archaeological work, which was carried out on the 31st August and the 1st, 2nd & 5th September 2016 by George Anelay of West Sussex Archaeology Ltd.

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 sometime 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).

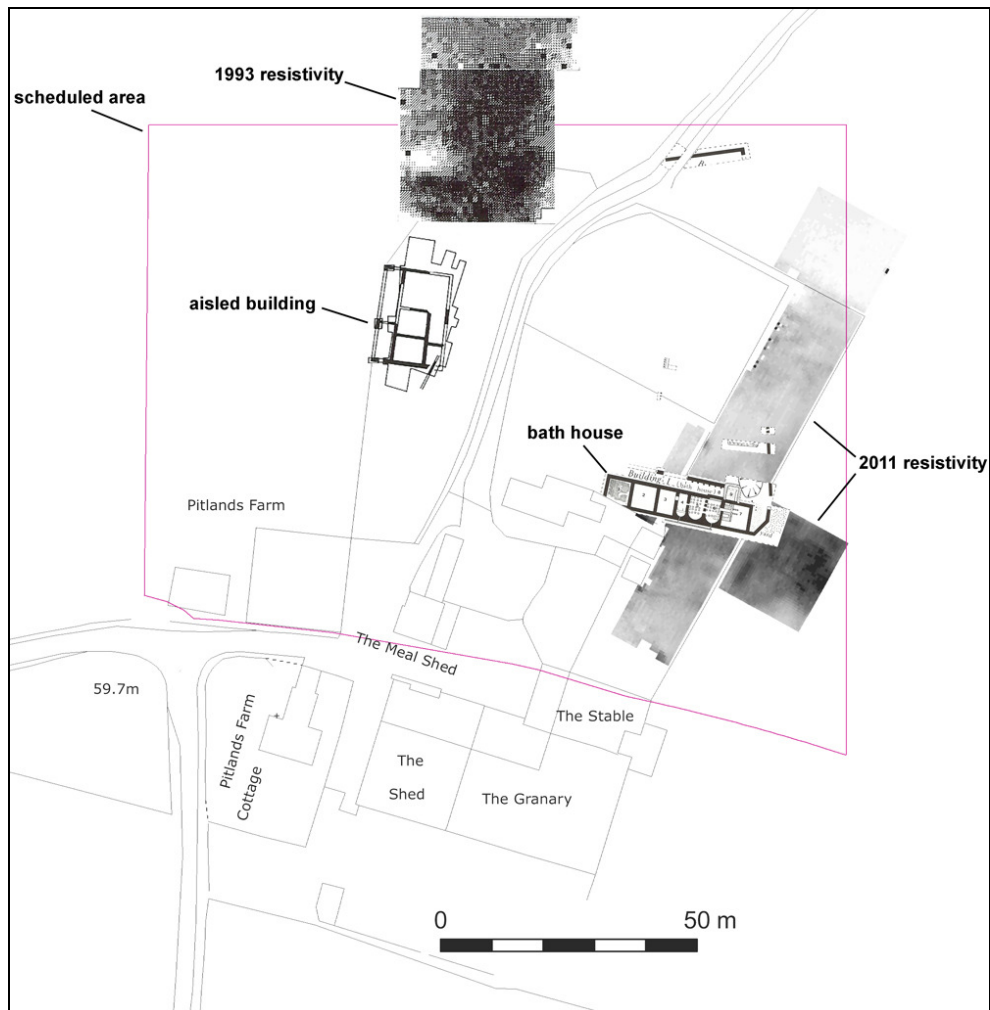


Figure 2 Plan of known archaeological features and the geophysical surveys. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. License number: AL100036068

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. 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).
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.

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

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

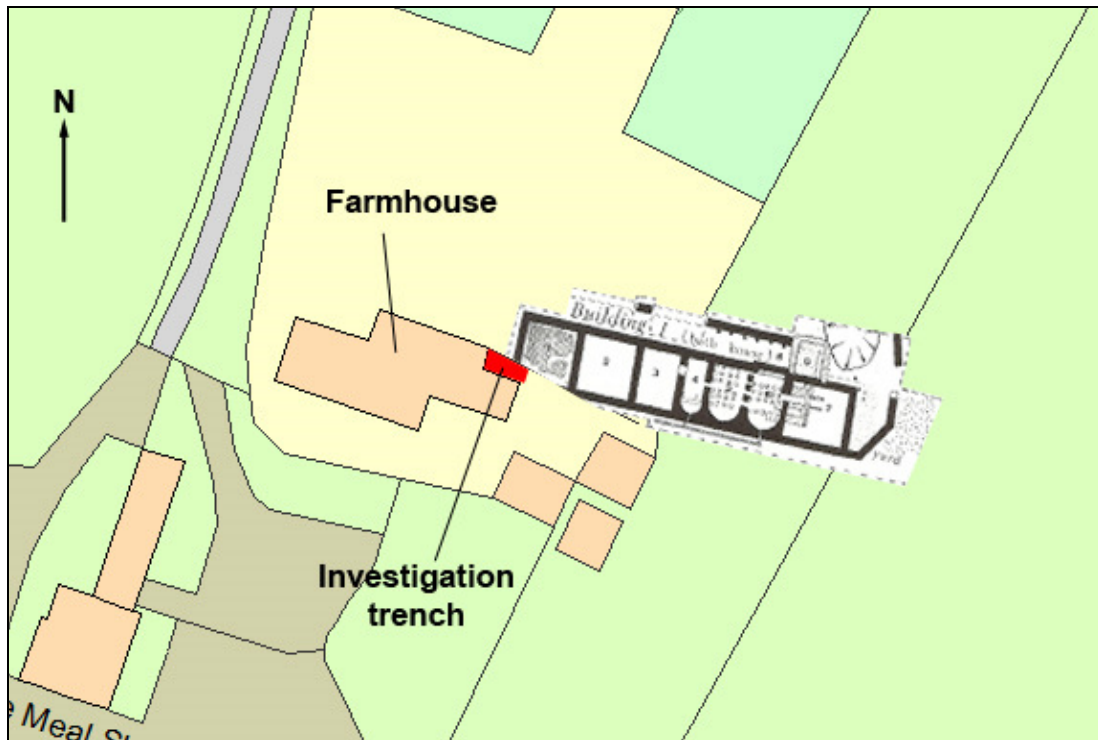


Figure 3 Plan showing the area of the proposed extension and co-extensive investigation trench (in red) in relation to Farmhouse. The known remains of the Roman bath house are shown

1. A single trench was excavated covering the area of the proposed extension (see Figs. 3 & 4). Below c. 0.2m of modern topsoil a uniform layer of mid-brown clay silt ((2) in Fig.4) was encountered throughout, containing frequent medium to large flints and post-medieval and modern peg tile, brick and pottery. This layer overlay the natural orange clay with flints. No trace was found of any Roman deposits, features or structures, almost certainly as a result of the post-Roman truncation of all layers in this area. The highest surviving surface of the natural clay with flints lies 0.84m below that of the Bathhouse floor (see Fig. 4), sufficiently deep to be below any Roman wall foundations.

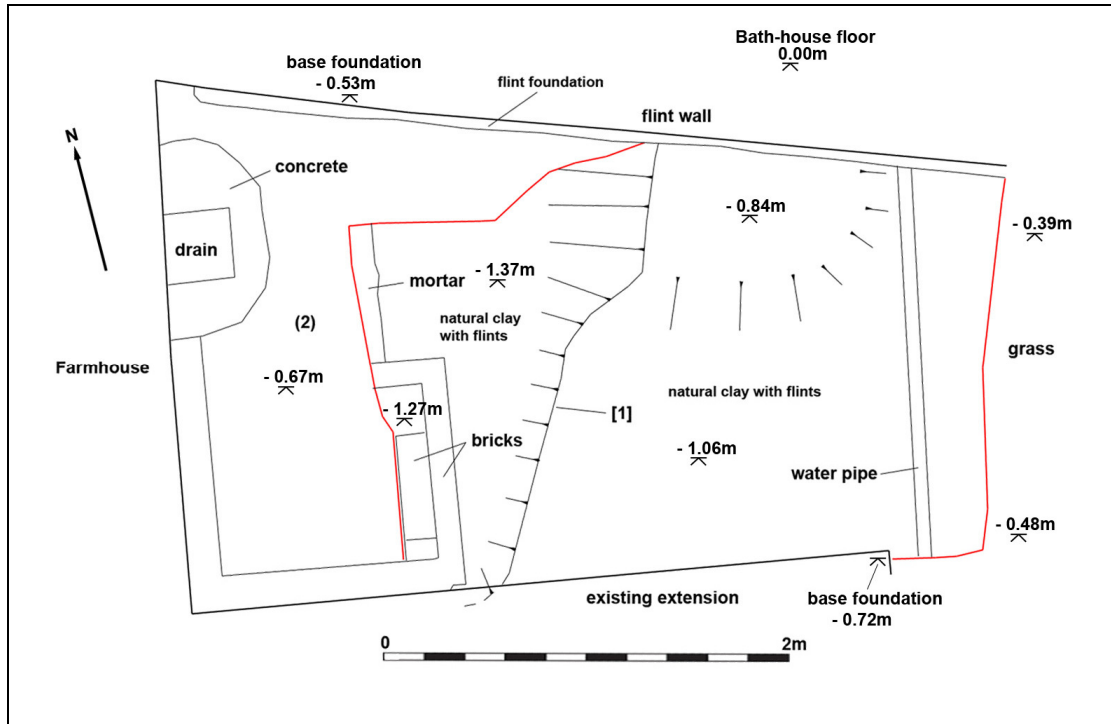


Figure 4 Plan of features within the Investigation trench

2. It would appear that this area of the site had been truncated and then back-filled before the construction of the existing eastern extension to the building and the existing flint wall retaining the higher garden soils to the north, since both these structures were constructed above the soil layer (2) overlying the natural clay with flints. The Ordnance Survey 1st edition 1:2500 map shows the extension and the garden wall to be in place by 1875, indicating that the truncation and infilling must have taken place prior to this.



Figure 5 The east face of the Investigation trench, showing the flint retaining wall to the left



Figure 6 The investigation trench, looking south

3. The western half of the area investigated had been reduced to a much deeper level than that to the east. Here a trench ([1] in Fig.4), c. 0.67m deep, running approximately north-east to south-west, was partially excavated. At its base was a brick structure of 18th or 19th century date, the limits of which were not reached. The purpose of this trench, and the brick structure, is not clear, however it is possibly the remains of an earlier eastern extension to the Farmhouse, which contained a sunken floor, possibly for cold storage.

CONCLUSION

1. The results from the investigation trench clearly indicate that any surviving Roman deposits, features or deposits, which may once have existed within the area of the proposed extension, have been destroyed by subsequent truncation. The date of this truncation is unclear, although it may have been carried out in the 18th or 19th century and associated with a brick structure of that date found in a trench against the wall of the Farmhouse. The latter's existing eastern extension, and the flint garden wall to the north, were both constructed after the demolition of the brick structure and the subsequent raising of the ground level, probably in the second half of the 19th century.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

West Sussex Archaeology 2016 *Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Works at Pitlands Farm, Up Marden, West Sussex*. Unpublished.