



**Report on a Programme of Archaeological Works at
Chesworth House, Denne Road, Horsham, West Sussex**

September 2009

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This document sets out the results from a programme of archaeological works carried out by West Sussex Archaeology Ltd. at Chesworth House, Denne Road, Horsham, West Sussex in July 2009. A short section of the stone footings of a wall which once surrounded a courtyard garden were found, together with some evidence to support the theory that the 15th century portions of Chesworth House originally extended for one additional bay to the north, but not the suggested two.

BACKGROUND

Topographical Background

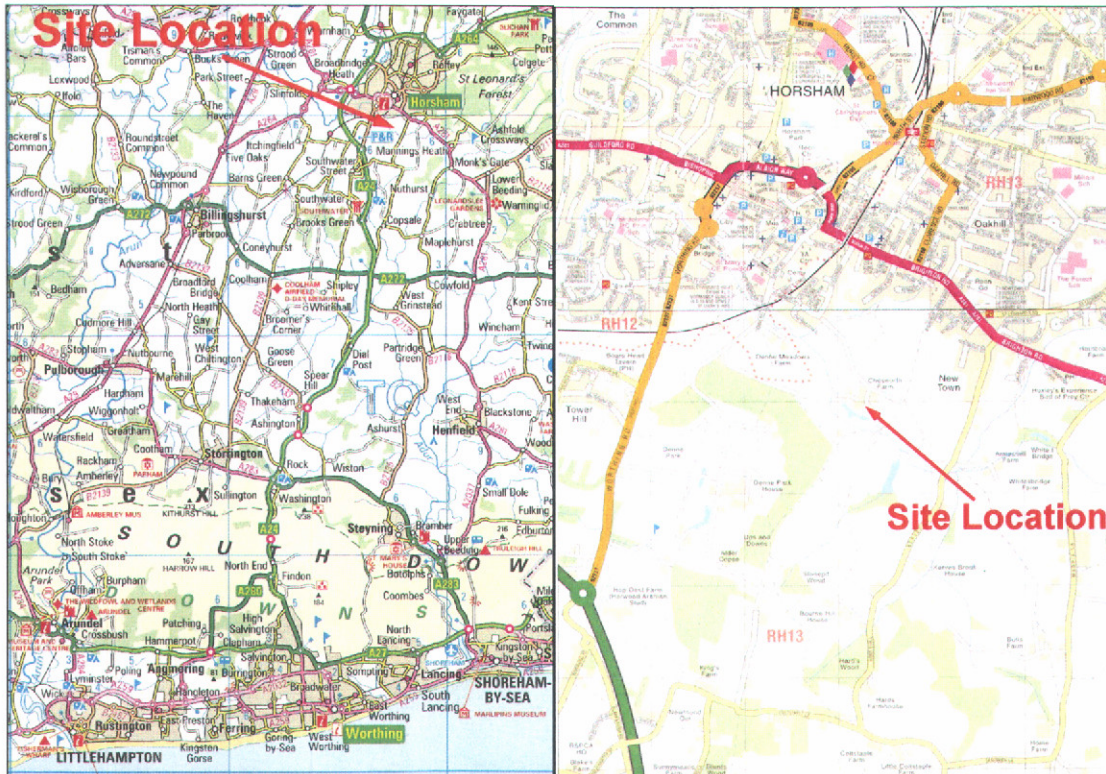


Figure 1 Site location. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. License number: AL100036068

1. Chesworth House lies c. 1/4m to the south of the town of Horsham in West Sussex (Fig.1). The site sits at 45m aOD and is centred at OS grid reference TQ 17652950. The underlying geology of the site is Weald Clay and Tonbridge Wells Sand.

Project Background

1. Mr. Joao Pita obtained planning permission (no: DC/09/0637) from Horsham District Council for the erection of 2 x 2-storey extensions, re-building of utility and tractor shed at Chesworth House, Horsham, West Sussex. This planning permission included a condition (no.3) which stated that: "An archaeological investigation of the site shall be carried out at the expense of the developer in accordance with a specification to be submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority in writing (following the demolition of existing buildings and) before the commencement of any building works."
2. West Sussex Archaeology Ltd. was appointed by Mr .Pita to draw up and submit such a written scheme of investigation (WSA 2009) and to carry out any resulting fieldwork work. This report details the results from that fieldwork.
3. The archaeological works were carried out from 13th – 15th July 2009 by George Anelay of West Sussex Archaeology Ltd.

Historical Background

1. There are historical references to a manor and warren of Chesworth dating to the 13th century and it is likely that these were administered from a complex of buildings on the moated site immediately to the south of the current house (Hughes 1997).
2. The various elements that make up the modern Chesworth House date from the late 15th century onwards. The earliest block is thought to be that to the north-east, with a brick addition to the south constructed in the early 16th century (known as "the chapel" or "the Earl of Surrey's Tower"). Further rooms were added to the west in the 17th century in a block running at right angles to that already in existence. Other sections were added in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries (Ibid.)
3. It is believed on the basis of documentary references that additional buildings may have once existed in the vicinity of the current house (Ibid.).

RESULTS

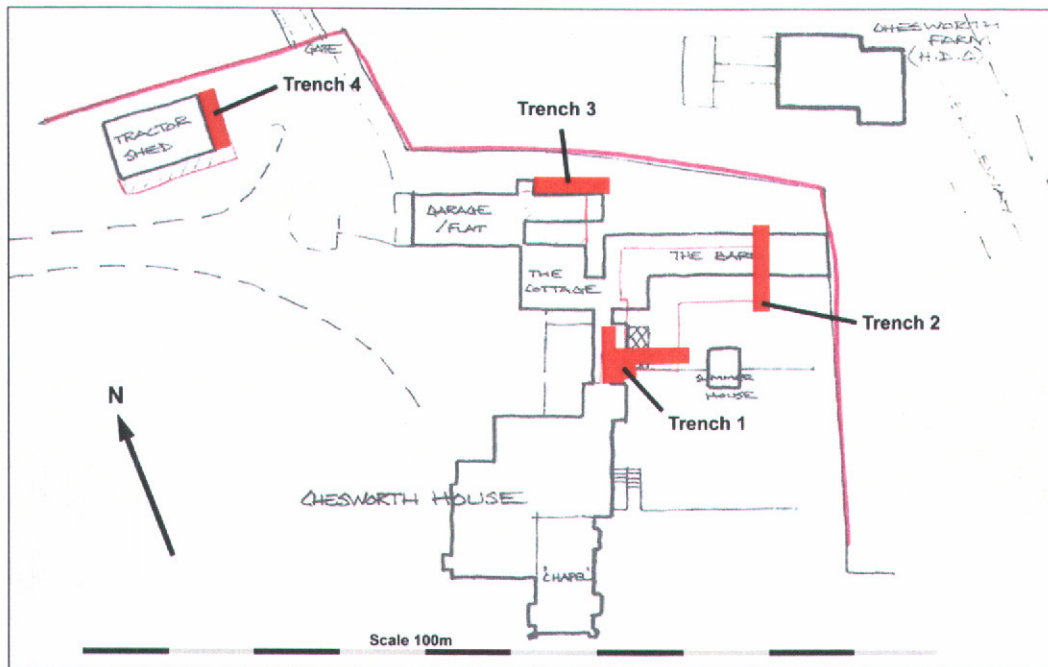


Figure 2 Plan of all the trenches.

1. Four trenches were excavated over the locations of the proposed developments. Trench 1 was positioned immediately to the north of the lobby to the existing main house. It was thought possible that the 15th century building, which now forms the north-east block of Chesworth House, could have originally extended for a further one or two bays northwards (Hughes 2008). If this had been the case then Trench 1 would lie over the second of these two projected bays.

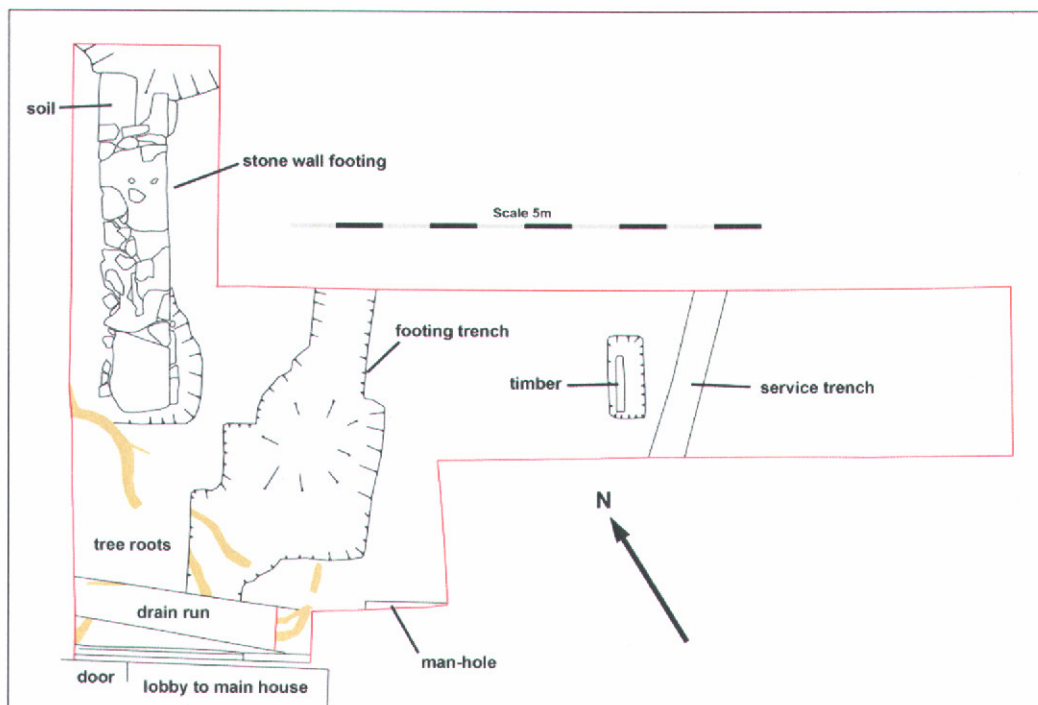


Figure 3 Plan of Trench 1.

2. The soil within Trench 1 had been heavily disturbed in comparatively recent times, with modern brick rubble extending to the surface of the undisturbed clay geology. This is almost certainly a result of the construction, in the second half of the 20th century, and then subsequent demolition of, the range of rooms linking the main house with the cottage to the north. Indeed the footing trench for part of this development was found within the trench, where the foundations had been dug through the clay into the underlying gravels. Other modern activity was evident in a drain trench adjacent to the footings of the existing lobby, linking to the man-hole, and another service trench to the east. A number of large tree roots were also noted, extending out from a large tree to the north-west of the trench, which had been recently felled.

3. No evidence for the second extra bay to the 15th century building was found, however the stone footings of a wall were revealed, running north-south from the house. No clear dating evidence for this wall was recovered, although it clearly pre-dates the 20th century range of rooms. An examination of historic mapping indicates that a boundary existed on exactly this alignment until the early-mid 20th century, possibly being removed with the construction of the aforementioned range of rooms. Historically this boundary, together with the eastern wall of the main house, had formed the western limit of a bounded courtyard to the east.

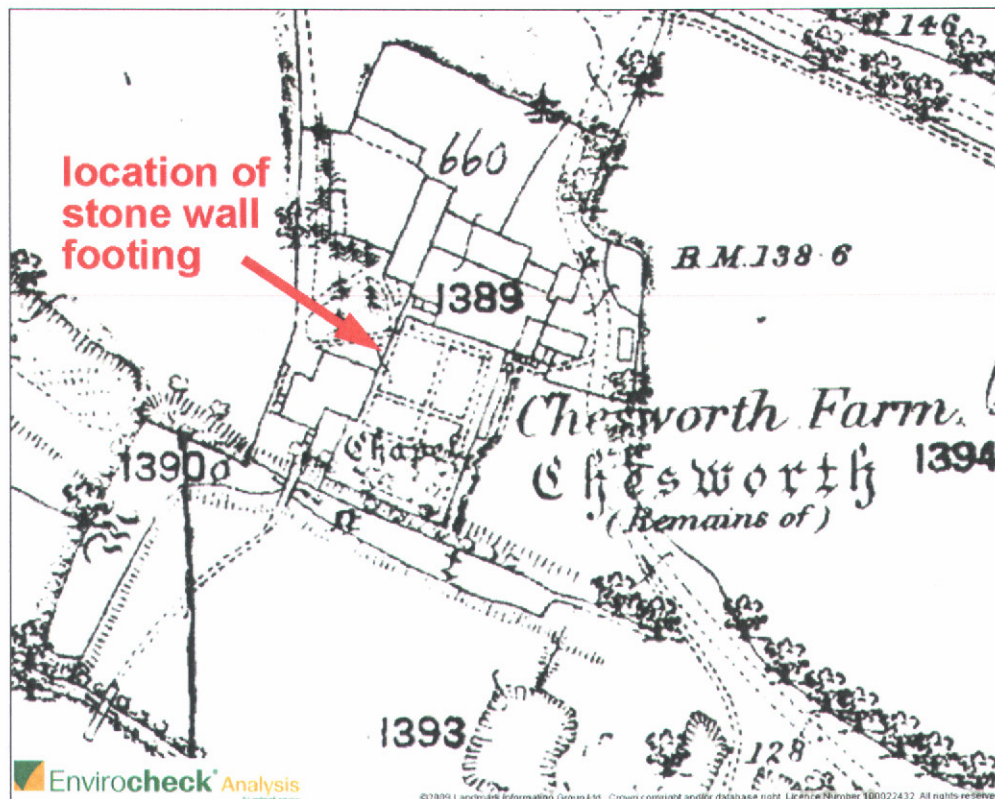


Figure 4 1875 1st edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of Chesworth House. This shows the courtyard garden to the east of the main house.

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4. Only a 3.4m long stretch of the stone wall footing survived. At its southern end it appears to stop 2.5m short of the existing house lobby. This end is almost certainly not the result of earlier demolition, since to the north the wall footing sits within a shallow trench dug through the natural clay into the underlying gravel, whereas at this point that trench ends and the clay remains undisturbed to the south. At its northern end any continuation of the wall has been completely removed by modern development, however the small area of soil visible in what remains of the walls footing trench suggests that it had been robbed away before the cutting of the foundations for the 20th century buildings that replaced it.



Figure 5 The stone wall footing looking north. The scale is 2m.

5. The footing itself is composed of Wealden sandstone (Horsham stone), only one or two courses deep and 0.7m wide, which sits directly upon the natural gravels. Upon this foundation traces of a yellow mortar survived, which seems to have been the bonding material for the wall proper above. The wall itself was probably composed at least in part of lower greensand block-work, since two large examples of this were dislodged from the footing during the removal of the overlying soil.

6. Five metres to the east of this wall footing a 0.9m x 0.4m pit was excavated containing the rotting remains of a length of timber, 0.6m x 0.1m. Since the historic mapping indicates that the area to the east of the wall was a formal garden, it seems likely that this timber has some now unknown horticultural link.

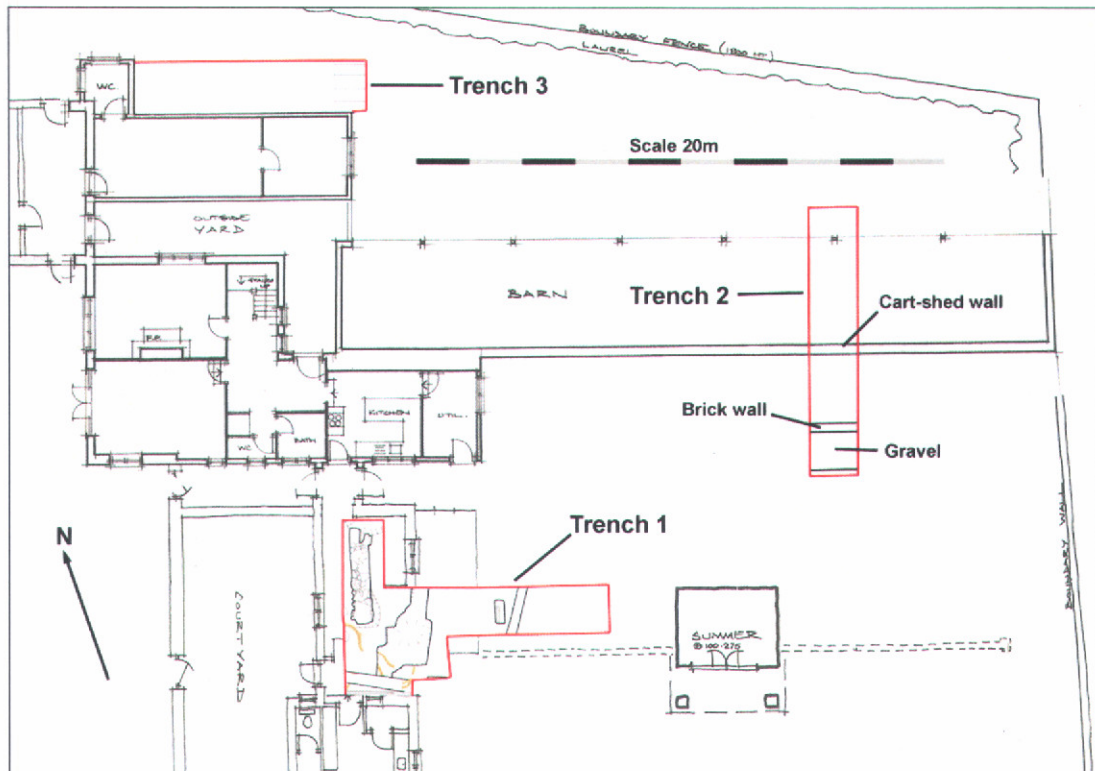


Figure 6 Plan of Trenches 1 – 3.

7. Trench 2 was located to the north-east of trench 1, over the position of a proposed new wing. The ground in the northern half of the trench had been previously reduced to the surface of the natural clay and no archaeological features were noted. Immediately prior to the archaeological work the greater part of a cart-shed had been demolished in this area, leaving only its eastern gable end. The footing for the rear wall of this structure was found within Trench 2. Although badly truncated by the demolition work it was possible to record that the lowest parts of it appeared to be constructed of Wealden Sandstone, as in Trench 1. An examination of the short surviving end to this wall to the east, where it attached to the preserved gable end, indicated that the bulk of the wall was composed of lower greensand block-work, with bricks providing its facing to the south and further brickwork used as repairs in the north face.
8. The evidence from Trenches 1 and 2, together with that from the historic maps and the visible remains, indicates that a stone wall, faced on its interior with bricks, once surrounded a garden courtyard to the east of Chesworth House. The date of construction for this wall was not established from these excavations, however the surviving brickwork is

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strikingly similar to some of that used for the main house and is certainly not modern. The north-western stretch of this wall had clearly been demolished in the 20th century, but the whole northern section, which had been re-used in the late 19th century as the back wall to the cart shed, was permitted to be demolished as part of this development. The eastern side still survives.



Figure 7 The surviving part of the north courtyard wall as re-used by a late 19th century cart-shed, looking south.

9. To the south of the cart-shed wall in Trench 2, c.0.3m of topsoil survived bounded behind the remains of a single width brick wall. To the south of this a gravel surface 0.6m wide sat upon the clay natural. This was overlain by a 0.05m layer of cinders. It is probable that these represent a raised bed against the courtyard wall, fronted by a cinder path. This arrangement appears to be that shown on the 1875 map (fig.4).
10. Trench 3 was located to the north of the existing buildings, in an area to be re-developed. The ground in the area of the trench had been previously reduced to the surface of the natural clay and no archaeological features were noted. At the extreme east end of the trench the natural clay sloped down to the east into a depression filled with modern rubble. It is probable that this depression is associated

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with the demolition of the barn that once existed here and burnt down in the late 20th century.

11. Trench 4 was located to the east of the existing garage, which is to be re-built as part of this development. No archaeological features were noted. Below the existing soil and rubble spread a modern brick yard surface was found, which had been overlain by concrete to the east. These bricks sat directly upon the natural clay.
12. The spoil from each trench was surveyed for artefacts by eye and using a metal-detector, however nothing of any significance was retrieved, probably due to the high level of modern disturbance.

SURVIVAL OF DEPOSITS

1. Modern disturbance to the north of the main house at Chesworth has been extensive due to a succession of extensions and outbuildings. However a short stretch of the footings of the eastern courtyard wall was recorded lying 2.5m to the north of the existing lobby. This same wall appears to have once surrounded the courtyard, but now only survives on its eastern side. The integrity of this walled courtyard garden has been gradually eroded with developments encroaching upon it from the north-west and now from the north, with the demolition of another stretch of its boundary wall.
2. No trace of a second additional bay to the 15th century portion of Chesworth House was found. Indeed the position of the courtyard wall, should it have been in place before these bays were demolished, which seems likely, would make such a bay impossible. However the southern terminus of the excavated courtyard wall footing adds support to the idea of one additional bay, since if such a bay had not existed the gap between the wall's end and the house would seem overly large. The evidence for a second additional bay is based upon the numbering of the surviving collars within the existing house. This starts at XII and it has been assumed that they should begin at X. This seems much less likely than that they begin with XI; hence there would be an X 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5. The northern end of the original building, should such an extra bay exist, would therefore be approximately on the same line as the north wall of the existing lobby.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Hughes, A. 2008. *Chesworth House, Horsham*. Unpublished.

West Sussex Archaeology Ltd. 2009. *Method Statement for a Programme of Archaeological Works at Chesworth House, Denne Road, Horsham, West Sussex*. Unpublished.