

◆ Abstract of the 1995–1999 excavations

Excavations immediately to the east of Fishbourne Roman Palace (Area A) revealed the complete ground plan of a courtyard building lying very close to the front of the later Palace (Fig. 7). The building, known as Building 3, was classical in design and aligned east to west. Dating evidence is not particularly precise, but it is suggested that the building was constructed in the second half of the 1st century AD. The function of the building is problematic, although various strands of evidence suggest that the building probably had a public or an administrative function, and may have been constructed by the military. The building seems to have survived in front of the Palace (which was constructed around AD 75) perhaps until the end of the 2nd century AD. A complex series of deposits, finds and structures was uncovered to the immediate north of the building.

A small trench (known as Area B; Fig. 7) was excavated a little way to the north of Building 3. A ditch ran east to west across the trench. A mixture of imported fine wares and indigenous coarse wares from the bottom of the ditch suggest the ditch was dug prior to AD 43, perhaps as early as the first decades of the 1st century AD. The relationship between

Building 3 and the ditch in Area B is not yet known.

A full range of edited specialist reports is provided in this publication, including a reconstruction of the original appearance of Building 3. In addition, maps illustrating the spatial distribution of various categories of small finds have revealed a considerable amount about specific human behaviours and site-formation processes. The report concludes with an appraisal of the Fishbourne in the early Roman period, and has relevance for the study of the conquest in AD 43. Additional information and data relevant to these excavations will be found on the ADS website <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/resources.html?sussexac>.

Since Area B is a smaller excavation, separate from the main site of Area A, when there are significant references to Area B, both within the main stratigraphic report, and in the specialists' reports, these will be highlighted by the use of shading, as in this sentence. This device is adopted since future excavations will explore a larger area (called Area C) around Area B. These future excavations will be published separately, and the use of shading in this report will allow the reader to integrate the results from the two sites (i.e. Areas B and C) and from the two publications more easily.
