

A second season of excavation was undertaken at Witley Court in 1997 to examine various areas to the north of the house prior to the start of the reconstruction works planned by English Heritage, this also allowed us to complete elements of the first season which could not be undertaken at the time.

The areas of interest which required investigation were as follows:

1. Between the wings of the house, to the north
2. The steps just north of the eastern wing of the house and its associated path
3. To the north of the house within the current car-park
4. To the north-east of the house, where geophysical anomalies had been detected
5. The viewing platform to the north of the east-west driveway.
6. Outside the current entrance to the car-park (requested by J.Lomax)
7. To the north of the lake to examine a footpath (requested by J.Lomax)

The purpose of excavations within these areas can be summarised as follows:

To discover the nature and width of the original driveway situated between the wings of the house. As this is to be reinstated the original width of the driveway, its makeup and relationship to the walls of the wings had to be ascertained. Two trenches were opened to this end, BW1 and BW2.

Directly to the north of the eastern wing of the house are located the remains of steps which once led to the eastern garden. These were to be excavated to assess the condition of the remains and to allow the methodology of construction to be recorded, Trench BW3. Between these steps and the eastern wing another area was to be excavated to examine the slope up to the wing and the drainage in this area, Trench BW5. At the western edge of the eastern wing another trench was excavated, BW4, to examine the relationship between the driveway and the east-west gravel path leading to the steps.

To discover the nature and width of the driveway as it approached the house, and to discover any evidence for flower beds or ornamental garden features bordering this driveway. As this is also to be reinstated the exact width and makeup of the driveway had to be discovered. Any evidence of the drainage for this area was also to be located, if possible. To achieve these aims two large trenches, BY1 and BY2 were opened

This was the area where a large service block is known to have once stood. It is planned to replace the arboretum in this area and so the impact of tree-planting on any surviving remains was to be assessed by excavation of selected areas, depending upon the results of a geophysical survey. The results of this survey confirmed that the remains of the building were still in situ and a series of trenches were to be excavated, EB 1-6.

To the north of the current east-west driveway are the remains of the viewing platform, which once allowed a perspective over the front pool. A trench was put across this area to investigate the condition of the wall remains and ascertain the nature of the original surface in this area.

The Landscape Architect, John Lomax, requested that we investigate an east-west path located to the north of the front pool. He was particularly interested in the survival and makeup of the path as it is intended that this be used by members of the public when the new car-park is opened. Two trenches were opened, BX1 and BX2.