

ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
WATCHING BRIEF AT  
WITLEY COURT,  
GREAT WITLEY,  
WORCESTERSHIRE

SUPPLEMENT TO HEAS REPORT 1436

Elizabeth Curran and Tom Vaughan

19 March 2010

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Project 3469  
WSM 42112



## Archaeological watching brief at Witley Court, Great Witley, Worcestershire

### Supplement to HEAS Report 1436

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#### Background

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Witley Court, Great Witley, Worcestershire (SAM 306; centred on NGR: SO 7695 6494), on behalf of English Heritage, on 18 March 2010.

The project followed on from earlier phases of watching brief, also undertaken by the Service, once in 2006 (Potten and Templeton 2006; WSM 35066), and twice in 2009 (Vaughan and Hughes 2009; WSM 40601; Curran 2009, WSM 40601).

#### Methods

Three postholes were hand excavated for the reinstallation of two public information panels (Fig 5). Observation of the postholes was undertaken during and after excavation. Deposits were recorded according to standard Service practice (CAS 1995). The exposed surfaces were generally sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits.

#### Deposit Descriptions

##### *Panel 13 - re-excavated*

Maximum dimensions: length: 0.46m width: 0.48m depth: 0.44m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
1300	Disturbed topsoil	Mid brown silty sand. Turfed. No inclusions.	0.00-0.13m
1301	Concrete	Fill of existing posthole.	0.13m+
1302	Disturbed soil and possible demolition material	Mid brown silty sand covering brick fragments which continued beyond the area of excavation. Left in situ & sealed by plastic.	0.44m

##### *Panel 16 - original location*

Maximum dimensions: length: 0.23m width: 0.20m depth: 0.34m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
1600	Topsoil	Mid reddish brown silty sand. Rare small stones and pebbles. Sub rounded and sub angular.	0.00-0.32m
1601	Natural	Mid orange brown sandstone	0.32m+

*Panel 16 - new location*

Maximum dimensions: length: 0.20m width: 0.20m depth: 0.48m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
1700	Topsoil	Mid light reddish brown silty sand. Turfed. No inclusions	0.00-0.38m
1700	Natural	Mid orange brown sandstone	0.38m+

**Discussion**

Panel 13 lies to the south-west of the Conservatory (Fig 5). The posthole opened for the reinstallation of the panel was wider than, but did not exceed the depth of, the previously excavated posthole (Plates 1 and 2; Potten and Templeton 2006, 5 and fig 2).

Deposit 1300, was considered to be disturbed topsoil, probably redeposited after the original excavation of the posthole in 2006. Once the concrete was removed from the hole a modern plastic sack was found, sealing fragments of brick and mortar (1302), which were left in situ as they continued beyond the edge of excavation. It is likely that this deposit is the same one observed in 2006 which was believed to be demolition debris relating to an earlier conservatory on the south west of the house (*ibid*).

Panel 16 was moved from the south side of the East Parterre to the north-west side (Plates 3 and 4; Potten and Templeton 2006, 6 and fig 2).

Deposits 1600 and 1700 within both postholes were identified as disturbed topsoil, imported for the landscaping of the formal gardens to the south and east of the house in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. This reflects the findings of the previous watching briefs, which identified similar deposits within that area (Potten and Templeton 2006; Vaughan and Hughes 2009). As observed in 2006, the natural Triassic sandstone (1601 and 1701) was observed within the base, between 0.32 and 0.38m below the ground surface (Plate 5).

It was not possible from these small interventions to define with any more accuracy the exact date or period of construction of the formal gardens.

No further significant archaeological features, layers, horizons, deposits or structures were exposed, nor artefacts recovered.

**Publication summary**

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on behalf of English Heritage at Witley Court, Great Witley, Worcestershire (SAM 306; centred on NGR: SO 7695 6494; WSM 42112).*

*Three postholes were excavated on the East Parterre and adjacent to the Conservatory; two re-excavations of existing panels posts and one new excavation. The silty sand topsoils in all three were interpreted to have been imported for the landscaping of the formal gardens to the south and east of the house in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Brick fragments were observed at the base of the posthole adjacent to the Conservatory. They were of indeterminate post-medieval date, although may represent demolition debris associated with a previous phase of building of the Conservatory.*

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*The natural Triassic sandstone was observed within the base of the postholes on the East Parterre, directly below the soils.*

*It was not possible from this small intervention to define with any more accuracy the exact date or period of construction of the formal gardens. No further significant archaeological features, layers, horizons, deposits or structures were exposed, nor artefacts recovered.*

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### Archive

Fieldwork progress reports AS2	1
Photographic records AS3	1
Digital photographs	15
Trench record sheets AS41	3

The project archive is intended to be placed at:	Worcestershire County Museum Hartlebury Castle, Hartlebury Near Kidderminster Worcestershire DY11 7XZ
telephone	01299 250416

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### Acknowledgements

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### Bibliography

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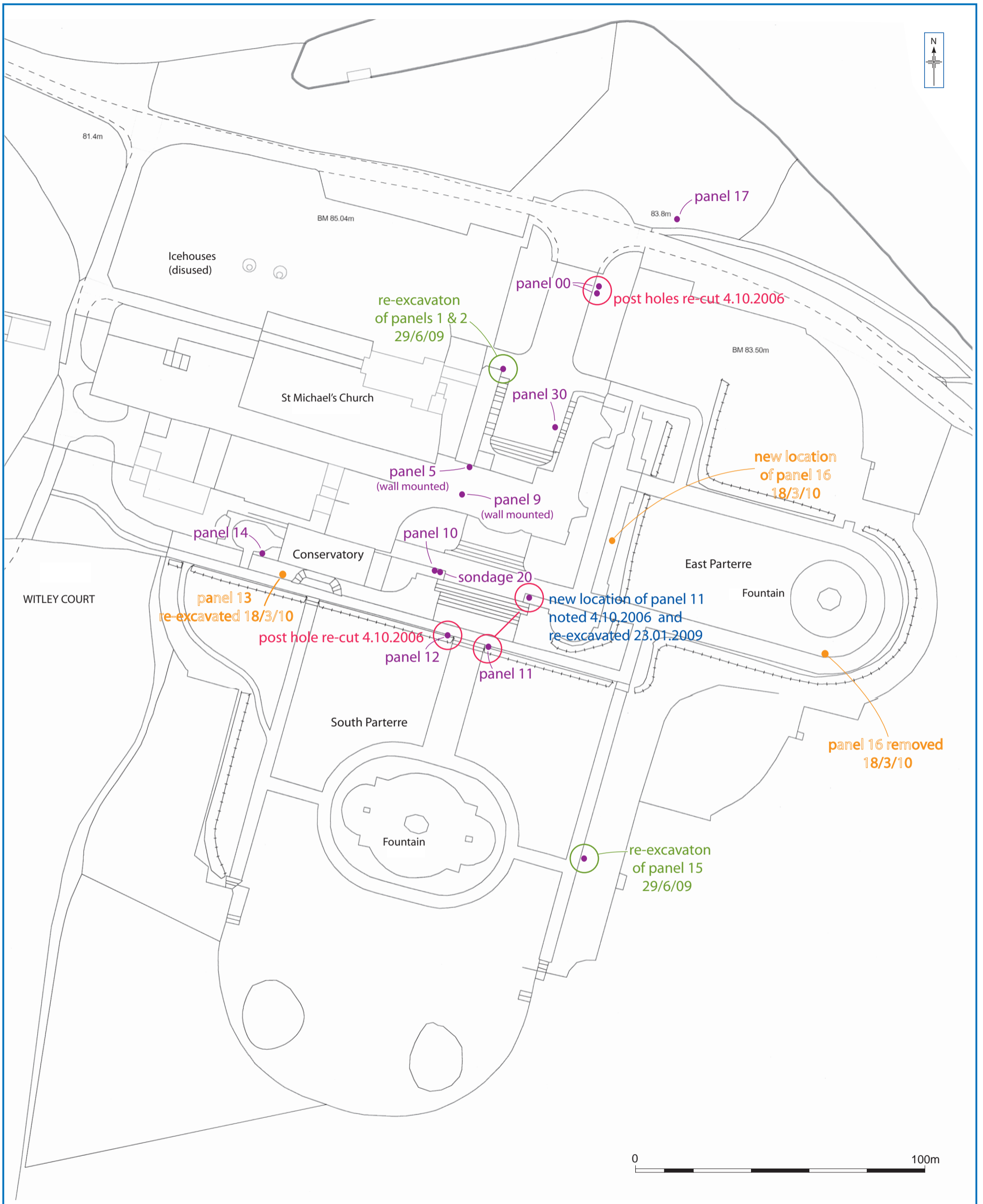
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## Figure



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Location of panel re-excavations 18/3/10

Figure 5

## Plates



*Plate 1: Re-cut posthole for Panel 13, view north*





*Plate 2: Panel 13 re-installed, view east*



*Plate 3: Existing post for Panel 16, view north-west*



*Plate 4: New location of Panel 16 prior to excavation, view south-east*



*Plate 5: Posthole cut for new location of Panel 16, view east*



*Plate 6: Panel 16 in the new location, view south-east*