PROJECT DESIGN FOR INVESTIGATION OF THE SITE AT LOWER FARM, WALBERTON, August 23rd-September 5th 2014

1 Introduction

This project design details the planned investigation of a site at Lower Farm, Walberton, owned by Mr Luke Wishart.

In the early summer of 2013, WAS member Debbie Lee had the opportunity to fly over the area and took many photographs (see Figure2 & previous reports/project designs) of the crop marks she observed. These revealed a series of features that were discussed at a meeting on 25.09.13. Of particular interest were the photographs showing a field at Lower Farm adjacent to the grain drying facility. John Mills (West Sussex County Archaeologist) suggested that these might include a (possibly late Bronze Age) field system, with some of the field boundary ditches being centred on an earlier (possibly early Bronze Age) barrow. The landowner (Mr Luke Wishart) also informed the meeting that this particular field (called Twotwelves by the landowner) is currently under grass in anticipation of the construction of a large solar array, scheduled to begin construction in April/May 2014. Between October 2013 and February 2014, WAS carried out a geophysical survey of part of the field and dug two evaluation trenches. These latter revealed a ditch in Trench A and a possible metalled surface in trench B. Mr Wishart then told WAS that the construction of the solar array had been delayed until 2015, opening the opportunity for a more prolonged investigation in 2014. This project design outlines the works to be carried out during the period 23rd August to 5th September 2014.

2 Site Location & Geology

The site is in the parish of Walberton, centred on SU 986047 at a height of c.4.5m above sea level. To the east the ground slopes sharply down to the Walberton rife, to the west there is a gentler slope into the adjacent field whilst to the south it slopes down to the railway track there being a break in slope at about the 3.5m mark. It therefore forms a fairly flat plateau surrounded on three sides by lower ground and is most likely a river terrace associated with the River Arun, which is c2km to the east (see Figure 1)

Geologically, there is a thin brickearth soil (c30-35cm) above a layer of fine, well-sorted sand.

Archaeologically, several other sites are known within the immediate vicinity. About a kilometre to the north is the Walberton Roman villa; whilst about 1/2km to the west is a multiperiod site with phases ranging from the Late Bronze age through to the late Roman periods. The aerial photographs provided by Debbie Lee showed a plethora of crop marks in the surrounding fields, attesting to a prolonged period of human activity in the area.

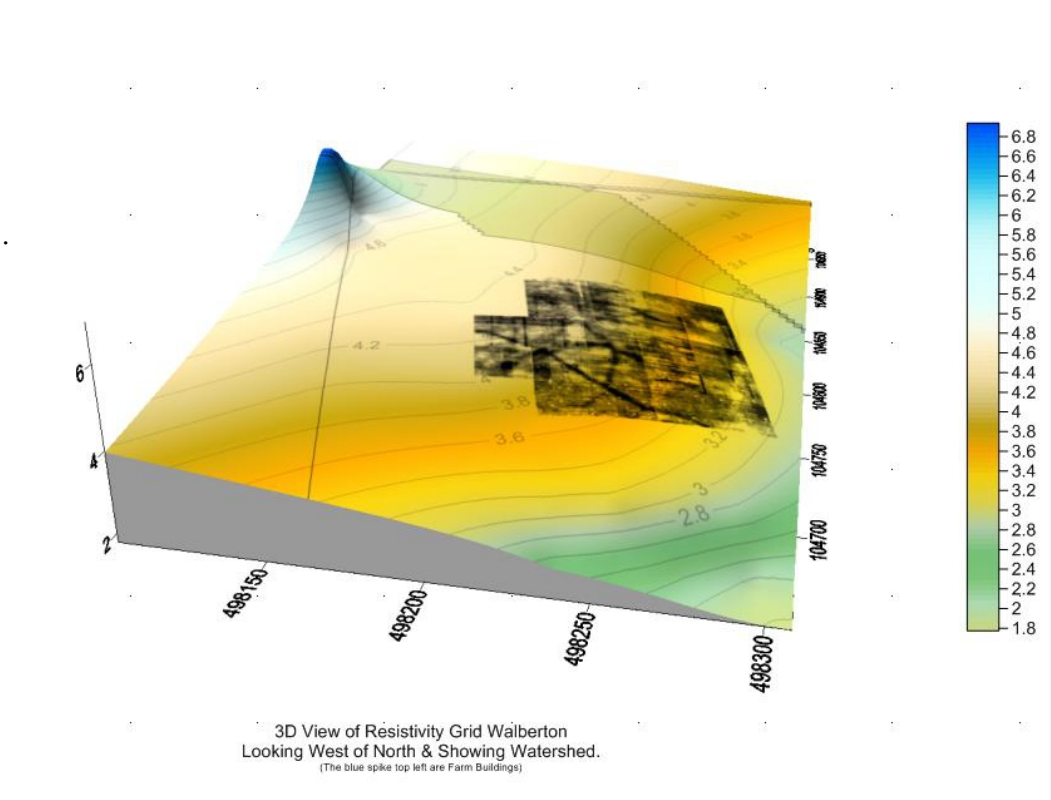


Figure 1 3D view of the site with the Resistivity results superimposed. Note the plateau like nature of the site.

3 Field Methodology for TFW14 Investigation

3.1 Objectives

1. To locate the circular feature seen in the aerial photographs

The aerial photograph (see Figure 2) clearly shows positive crop marks within the field. Of interest for this investigation is a circular feature, approximately 15m diameter, which appears to have two concentric dark areas (positives) separated by a light area (negative). If this is archaeological, then the scale would suggest either a barrow ring ditch or a roundhouse. This feature is not immediately apparent on the results of the resistivity survey. However, it is possible to identify and therefore locate features seen on both the aerial photographs and the resistivity results, in particular the strong linear feature with a characteristic 'dog leg' in it (identified as a ditch by the excavations in November 2014. By using these identified features it is possible to postulate the position of the circular feature, the most likely position being centred around the northeast corner of square B5 on the resistivity grid. To test this a 30 x 1.5m Trench G (see Figure 3) will be excavated. If this reveals indications of the circular feature then it will be extended to try to identify and accurately locate the feature.



Figure 2. Aerial photograph of the site.

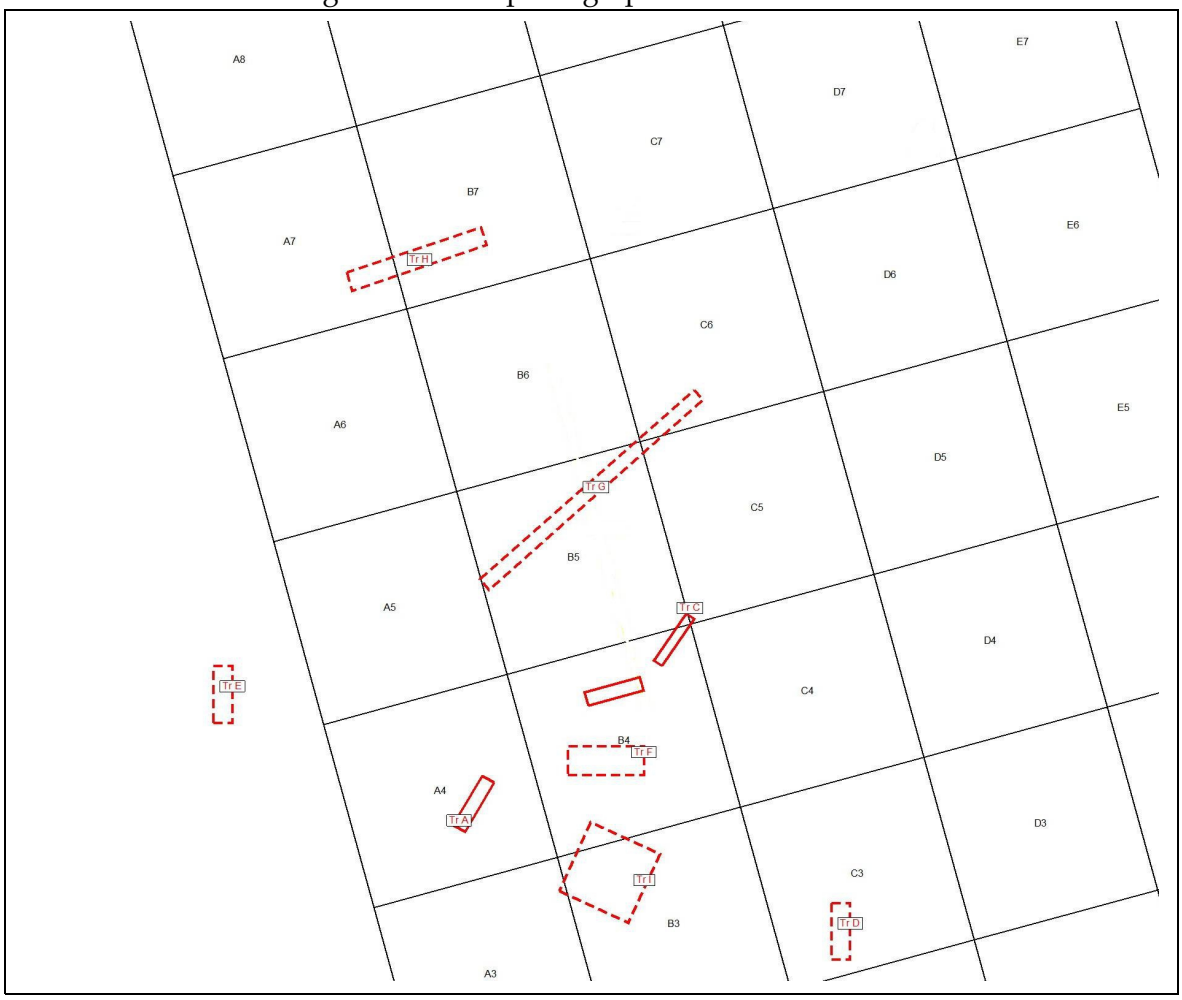


Figure 3. Positions of the proposed trenches, Summer 2014

2. T**o confirm the existence and extent of the ditch found in November 2013**

Trench A, dug in November 2013, showed a ditch, 3m wide and at least 1.8m deep. This had steep sides and appeared to have a flat base, however the latter was not proven as the watertable was breached at 1.75 depth. The fill consisted of orange grey, mottled clays and no stratigraphy was discernable or dateable artefacts recovered. Two further trenches will be excavated (Trenches D and E), both 6 x 3m, to further investigate this feature and try to recover some dating evidence.

3. To investigate the possible metalled feature see in Trench B, November 2014.

Evaluation trench B showed a possible metalled feature with side ditch to the west, this has been tentatively identified as a metalled track or road way, possibly associated with the villa some 300m to the north. Again, no dateable artefacts were recovered. Trench F, 8 x 3m, will be excavated just to the south of trench B to further investigate this feature (see Figure 3).

4. To investigate the relationship between the ditch and possible metalled feature.

On both the aerial photographs and the resistivity results, the anomalies associated with the ditch in trench A and the possible metalled feature in Trench B appear to cross each other in resistivity grid square B3. Trench I, 8 x8m, has been positioned to investigate the relationship between these two features.

4. To investigate the linear anomalies leading to the north on bearing towards the villa at Blacksmiths Corner.

Trench H, 15 x 2m is positioned to cut two linear anomalies that head northwards on a bearing that would take them to the villa at Blacksmiths Corner, some 300m north.

All trenches will be excavated by hand. The turf will be lifted and set aside for reinstatement. Contexts will be placed in separate spoil heaps and returned to the trench in the correct relative position. Sieving will be employed as and when appropriate. All artefacts recovered from beneath the plough soil will be collected for further analysis.

4.1 Site Records

- Details of the nature, extent and date (where it is possible to determine) of archaeological contexts will be recorded upon the standard WAS pro forma sheets.
- Measured drawings (plans at 1:20, sections at 1:10) will be made as appropriate, with particular emphasis on sections. All drawings to be accurately related to the OS National Grid.

- Levels will be taken where appropriate; ensuring that each context recorded can be related to Ordnance Datum. A TBM will be established on site and linked into the nearest OS BM.
- Photographs will be taken using a digital camera, using a suitable scale.
- Artefacts will be retained where considered appropriate in the light of their context and/or importance.
- All artefacts recovered during the excavation will be processed according to guidelines as set out in First Aid for Finds, 1998, and to the standards of Worthing Museum.
- All artefacts will be quantified by number and where appropriate weight.
- All artefacts will be bagged and boxed in containers approved by the museum and sympathetic to their condition. Specialist help will be sought where more detailed analysis and/or conservation is required.

4.1.1 Environmental Material

Environmental samples will be collected from all ditch contexts, and funding sought for their analysis if appropriate.

4.1.2 Metal Detecting

Metal detectors will be used to scan the various spoil heaps to locate finds missed by the diggers. Metal detectors will be used over the area of the trenches prior to hand excavation. Any 'hits' will be marked and left for recovery in the course of excavation.

4.1.3 Timetable

The excavation will take place between 23rd August and 5th September 2014. There will be a rolling programme of backfillng throughout the excavation. There will also be the opportunity for training regarding site recording on designated days.

4.1.4 Written Report

1. An interim report will be produced within three months of completion of the excavation. This report will be distributed to those mentioned below, and will be posted on the WAS website. It will also be published in the WAS newsletter/journal.
2. A final report will be prepared, which will include details of the excavation method, a description of the archaeological features, details of artefacts and an assessment of environmental evidence. The report will also include site location, trench details and feature plans tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid and sections showing levels above Ordnance Datum.
3. The site will be recorded on the West Sussex County Council HER and OASIS within twelve months of completion of the project.
4.

4.1.5 Deposition of Archive and Finds

Artefacts remain in the ownership of the Mr Luke Wishart and will be stored, initially at the Slindon office. Where relevant some material will be kept off-site if conservation standards require it.

4.1.6 Other

1. The trench(es), when unattended, will be secured and clearly marked in a manner commensurate with Health & Safety regulations. 'Deep Excavation ' notices will be used as appropriate.
2. A Risk Assessment will be carried out prior to the archaeological excavation and all relevant Health and Safety regulations will be complied with during the excavation. All members of the excavation team will be briefed on its contents before commencing work at the site. A first aid kit will be available on site at all times.
3. WAS are fully insured (as arranged through the Council for British Archaeology) to undertake all aspects of archaeological fieldwork
4. The initial excavation will be funded by the Worthing Archaeological Society. If dating or other scientific analysis is required, Sussex Archaeological Society will be approached for a Margary Grant. Alternatively the CBA South East regional society will be approached for a grant.
5. Personnel. All personnel will be members of WAS.