PROJECT DESIGN FOR INVESTIGATION OF THE SITE AT LOWER FARM, WALBERTON, 2013/2014

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 of the crop marks she observed. These revealed a series of features that were discussed at a meeting on 25.09.13. John Mills suggested that these might include an (possibly late Bronze Age) field system, with some of the field boundary ditches being centred on an earlier (possibly early Bronze Age) barrow. This is not an unusual feature, having been recorded at several other sites in the United Kingdom. However, if correct it would be the first time that it has been seen on the coastal strip of Sussex, indeed only two other barrows are known in the area. Mr Wishart then informed the meeting that the field is currently under grass in anticipation of the construction of a large solar array, scheduled to begin construction in April/May 2014 and with a projected lifespan of 20 years.

It was therefore decided to carry out an investigation of the site prior to the construction of the solar array.

2 Site Location & Geology

The site lies at a height of c10m above Ordnance Datum to the southeast of the buildings at Lower Farm, Walberton, centred around c SU983048 in a field known as Two Fourteens to the east of the B3132. The underlying geology is thought to consist of aeolian 'Brickearth' deposits.

3 Field Methodology for TFW13 Investigation

3.1 Objectives

1. To investigate what the observed crop marks represent

The aerial photograph (see Figure 1) 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. The former is more likely as there are linear features radiating away from the circular feature that could represent an ancient field system. The priority objective is therefore to establish what these features represent.

2. To establish a chronology of the various features observed.

The features clearly run into each other and, in some cases, appear to cut across each other. It is therefore desirable to try to establish their relative relationships in order to establish a chronology of occupation.



Figure 1. Aerial photograph of the site.



Figure 2. Aerial photograph annotated to show the possible positions of trenches A and B.

3.2 Investigation Approach

The investigation will consist of two phases.

Phase 1

To carry out a geophysical survey of the site using magnetometry and resistivity. Given access to the site, it should be possible to carry out a magnetometry survey of the whole field. At a minimum, restivity will be used over a 60m by 60m square centred on the circular feature. The results will be analysed and used in deciding locations for phase 2.

Phase 2

To carry out sufficient excavation to be able to answer the objectives. Obviously this will depend in part on the results of phase 1, but at this stage of planning it is anticipated that two trenches will be required. One (trench A) would look at the circular feature, it would extend from the centre of the feature and would be located to be able to see the relationship between the 'ring ditch' and one of the radiate 'field boundary' spurs. It would therefore need to be a minimum of 10m by 2m. The second trench (trench B) would be located away from the circular feature to look at the relationship between the various linear features that surround it. Figure 2 shows the possible positions of the two trenches.

Excavation will be done using hand tools. All ditch contexts will be sieved.

3.2.1 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.

3.2.2 Environmental Material

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

3.2.3 Metal Detecting

Metal detectors will be used to scan the various spoil heaps to locate finds missed be 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 Timetable

At this stage the provisional timetable is as follows.
Phase 1 to be carried out by the first week of November 2013.
Phase 2 to be carried out in the period November 2013 to end of March 2014.
Post-Excavation Analysis
It is envisaged that where possible all artefacts will be identified and reported on by local specialists.

5 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.

6 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.

7 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 if 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.