



PRELIMINARY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS - TEST PIT EXCAVATION 21-23 OCT 17

Site Details. Fane Road Allotments cover an area of almost 9 acres, divided into approximately 100 plots. An area in the northeast of the allotments is, in the main, uncultivated.

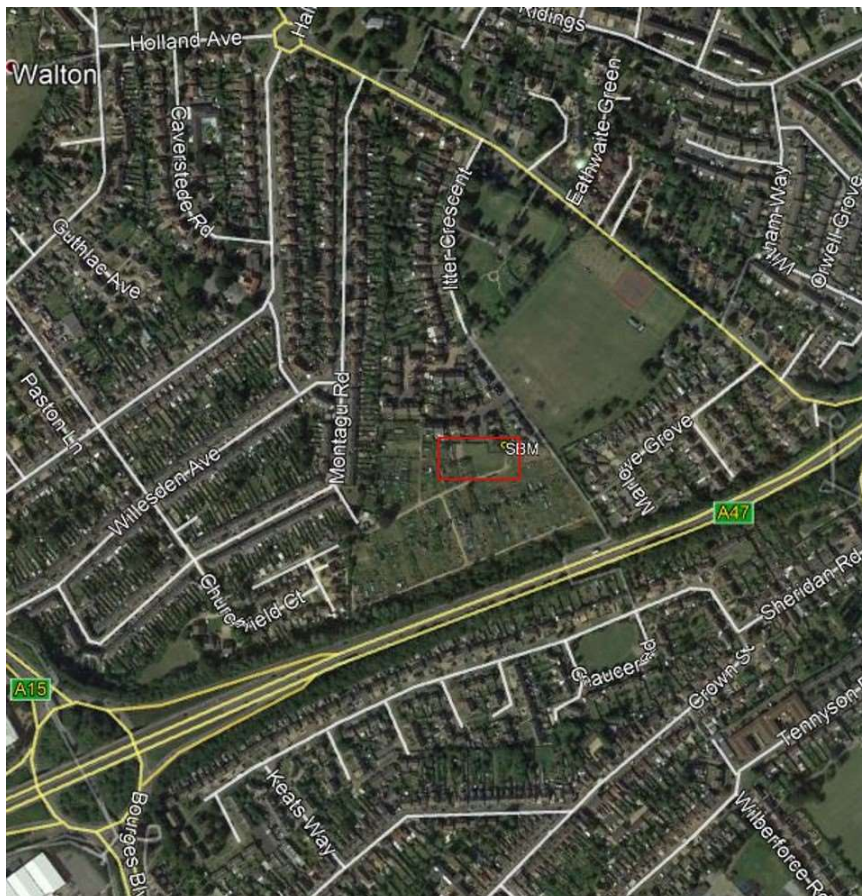


Figure 1 - Site Location

Land Use. Domestic cultivation for the growing of home produce and small scale livestock husbandry.

Historical Background. The boundaries of the two fields that were to become Fane Road allotments are historic and pre-date 1885. The land was agricultural, with the indication of two due ponds on OS maps from 1885 until at least 1955 suggesting pasture rather than arable. Between 1955 and 1993 the area was converted to allotment gardens. In 2005 the northern third of the allotments was identified for housing development which received planning approval in 2011 (*Peterborough Telegraph*, 2011). As a consequence, and in advance of the residential construction, archaeological evaluation and excavation was undertaken by Oxford Archaeology East (OA East) in 2011 and 2012 which revealed evidence of both Iron Age settlement and a Roman villa. This resulted in a community excavation coordinated by OA East undertaken in May - Jun 2014 (Fairbairn, 2015: 8). A series of test pit excavations was also undertaken by an OA

East outreach programme in 2012 - 2015, and subsequently by Fane Road Archaeology Group (FRAG) in 2016, within the bounds of the surviving allotments.

The site is known to have formed part of, or been otherwise associated with, the late Iron Age site previously identified to the immediate north and the subsequent Romano-British villa that replaced it (Fairbairn, 2015: 13).

Aims and Objectives. To revisit test pits from previous seasons that produced results requiring further investigation, specifically; establish the location of the southern part of the Iron Age enclosure ditch, establish any outlying Roman building foundations, locate and record Roman middens (rubbish tips) and establish the extent of the Roman metalled surface found in October 2015 with students of the Perse School.

Method. Five 2m x 1m test pits were identified, however, only the group of four (17-1, 17-2, 17-3, 17-5) were opened. The west side of Test Pit 17-1 was subsequently extended 0.5m to the depth of the Roman wall.



Figure 2 - Site Area with Test Pits Marked

Results.

- Test Pit 17-1. At ~0.5m to ~0.6m an intact wall was revealed along with thick clumps of mortar. Built in to the east face of this wall, and on a northwest/south east alignment, was a narrower wall with discoloured surface either side. This wall juncture resulted in angular inserts in the east face of the primary wall. Closely associated with the wall were fine ware pottery sherds in addition to the ever-present CBM. A finger of compacted surface different in colour and texture extended to the west from the east side of the test pit. To the south of this finger, and disappearing under the south side of the test pit, was a band of stones (with the occasional CBM).



Figure 3 - Test Pit 17-1, End of Day 4, Looking West



Figure 4 - Test Pit 17-2, End of Day 3, Looking North (West End)

- Test Pit 17-2. At ~0.5m a concentrated band of compacted CBM was exposed which dissipated in a thinning eastward spread.

- Test Pit 17-3. The sparse scatter of building rubble which dissipated in a thinning eastward spread that was encountered between ~0.1m to ~0.3m petered out by ~0.5m.

- Test Pit 17-5. The sparse scatter of building rubble which dissipated in a thinning eastward spread that was encountered between ~0.1m to ~0.3m petered out by ~0.5m.

Analysis.

- **Test Pit 17-1.** The wall at the west end is suggestive of Roman construction and appears to be surviving foundation with collapsed wall, interior face-up. A box-flue slot in the east face of the wall and heat discoloured surface east of the wall further suggests that this is the west wall of a structure. It has a possible alignment/association with the robbed out north-south west wall shown as context 207 on Figure 3 of the OA East 2014 excavation report (Fairbairn, 2015: 17).

- **Test Pit 17-2.** The compacted stone layer was not initially considered to be significant. However, as it bore no similarity with the compacted CBM layers in test pits 17-3 and 17-5, and as sealed archaeology was found under compacted stone surfaces (contexts 121, 124 and 128) during the 2014 excavation (Fairbairn, 2015: 13-14 and 18), the possibility of archaeology being similarly sealed cannot be ruled out.

- **Test Pits 17-3 and 17-5.** The compacted CBM layers are not considered to be of any diagnostic significance. The sections cut into each did not reveal any sealed archaeology.

Summary. An extremely rewarding excavation that has produced significant results which will need further investigation (provisionally programmed for April 2018), specifically;

- Whether the wall found in test pit 17-1 is an extension of the robbed-out north-south wall (context 207) revealed in the 2014 excavation (and the consequential re-appraisal of the southern range of the villa) or whether it represents a free-standing ancillary building.

- Whether there is further archaeology sealed by the compacted stone layer in test pit 17-2.

Bibliography

Fairbairn, J. 2015. *A Community Archaeology Excavation at Fane Road Allotment Site, Fane Road, Peterborough: Archaeological Excavation*. Bar Hill: Oxford Archaeology East.

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