

Design for the excavation of a proposed plant bed in the garden at Honeywood, Carshalton by the Carshalton and District History and Archaeology Society

Author	John Phillips
Site	Honeywood Museum, Honeywood Walk, Carshalton
Grid reference	TQ 27851 64489
Site code	
Borough	Sutton
Revised	21 June 2022

1. INTRODUCTION

The Friends of Honeywood Museum and the London Borough of Sutton have been working on the restoration of the garden at Honeywood. As part of the project, it is intended to create a plant bed along the wall of the sheds area to the south of the present house. This is on the site a 17th century building the foundations of which were exposed in an excavation in 1997. This showed that the foundations were covered with around 0.5m of garden soil. The proposed excavation is intended to check the depth of the foundations on the site of the proposed bed to ensure that the new planting does not damage them. The foundation will be left in situ.

The excavation is planned for August 2022.

2. THE SITE

2.1 An outline history

In the mid-19th century there were two houses at the western end of Carshalton Ponds. One, on the south side nearest the Greyhound and Pound Street, was known as Honeywood while the one to the north was called Wandle Cottage. Honeywood was demolished about 1884 and the name was transferred to Wandle Cottage which is the building now known as Honeywood. In this document the demolished south side building is called Honeywood 1 while the surviving north side building is called Wandle Cottage before c.1884 and then Honeywood. Both buildings appear to have been erected in the late 17th century.¹ Wandle Cottage had a complicated history of extension and modification in the 18th and 19th centuries. Less is known about Honeywood 1. There is some for internal alterations and mid-19th century photos and maps show a bay window on the front which may have been added about 1800.

In 1902, the then owner, John Pattinson Kirk added a large extension to the south end of Honeywood which partly covered the site of Honeywood 1. This included a drawing room with French doors opening to the garden. It is likely that the garden was significantly remodelled at this time. The plans for the extension include a small courtyard in the southeast corner of the garden which was clearly part of the new build. It included a potting shed, a greenhouse, two garden pits, a goat-house, a coke shed and an open shed.

Kirk died in 1913 and the house passed to his adopted daughter Lily Kirk Edwards in trust for

¹ The history of Wandle Cottage, later Honeywood is detailed in Phillips 2020 p. 3-22 while the original Honeywood is in Phillips 2015 p. 1-10.

her children. In 1940 Lily Kirk Edwards sold Honeywood to the Carshalton Urban District Council. They used the building for various wartime purposes and then turned it into offices and a venue for social activities such as wedding receptions. The building was let to charities and the turned into a Heritage Centre in 1989-90.

2.2 The 1997 excavation

In 1997 the Carshalton and District History and Archaeology Society carried out an excavation immediately west of the proposed trench. The excavation uncovered the foundations of part of Honeywood 1 and also a fragments of a pool or water work which lay to the west of it and predated it. These were underlain by gravel deposits of mid-17th century and possibly earlier date. Full details of this appear in Phillips 2015.



Figure 1. The features uncovered in the 1997 excavation. The north-south chalk foundation [HD21] was interpreted as the west wall of Honeywood 1. The three east-west aligned brick features were probably the foundations of internal walls within the house. The southward sloping bank [HD39] and the fragments of Reigate stone [HD59] were interpreted as the wall of a spring fed pool. Structure [HD57] may have been part of a sluice.

The remains of the house consisted of north-south aligned chalk rubble foundation about 0.8m

wide which was interpreted as the west wall ([HD21] on figure 1). It aligned with a chalk and flint chequer wall in the present Honeywood which probably dates from the late 17th century. This suggests that the two buildings were erected as a pair at the same time. There were also three east-west aligned brick foundations ([HD13], [HD25] and [HD27]) which were thought to be the remains of internal walls of a later date.

2.3 Foundation depths in the 1997 trench

The approximate depths from the grass to the top of the foundations in the 1997 trench were:

Chalk foundation [HD21] (highest point)	0.48m
Brick foundation [HD13] east end	0.55m
Brick foundation [HD25] east end	0.51m
Brick foundation [HD27] east end	0.55m

2.4 The garden on the excavation site

This area would have become garden about 1884 when Honeywood 1 was demolished. The garden must have undergone significant alteration when the 1902 extension and sheds area was built. However, there is no specific information on use and layout in the proposed excavation area apart from an air photo taken in 1921.² This shows cold frames at the north end of the area against the wall. The ground the south of these is only partly visible. There are some large flower pots or other objects adjacent to the cold frames and a large shrub or small tree against the wall and rising above it. Some low plants may also be shown but this is not clear.

The area to the west – which was the site of the 1997 excavation was a plant bed.

3. OBJECTIVES

The aims of the excavation are to:

- Establish the nature and extent of the foundation so that we can avoid disturbance cultivation the new plant bed.
- Find out about the position and nature of the front wall of Honeywood 1 and also details of the construction of the bay window which is presumed to be a later addition.

The foundations and any surviving areas of floor will be left in situ.

It is not intended to excavate the underlying gravel deposits.

4. METHODOLOGY

The work will be carried out in accordance with the guidance papers of the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service and the Molas Site Manual. Some additional data will be collected on the sizes of bricks and other ceramic building materials for comparison with other local structures.

4.1 Location and size of the trench

The trench will be 8m north-south by 1.8m east-west in the position shown in figure 2.

² *Britain from Above* web site photo number EPW006248.

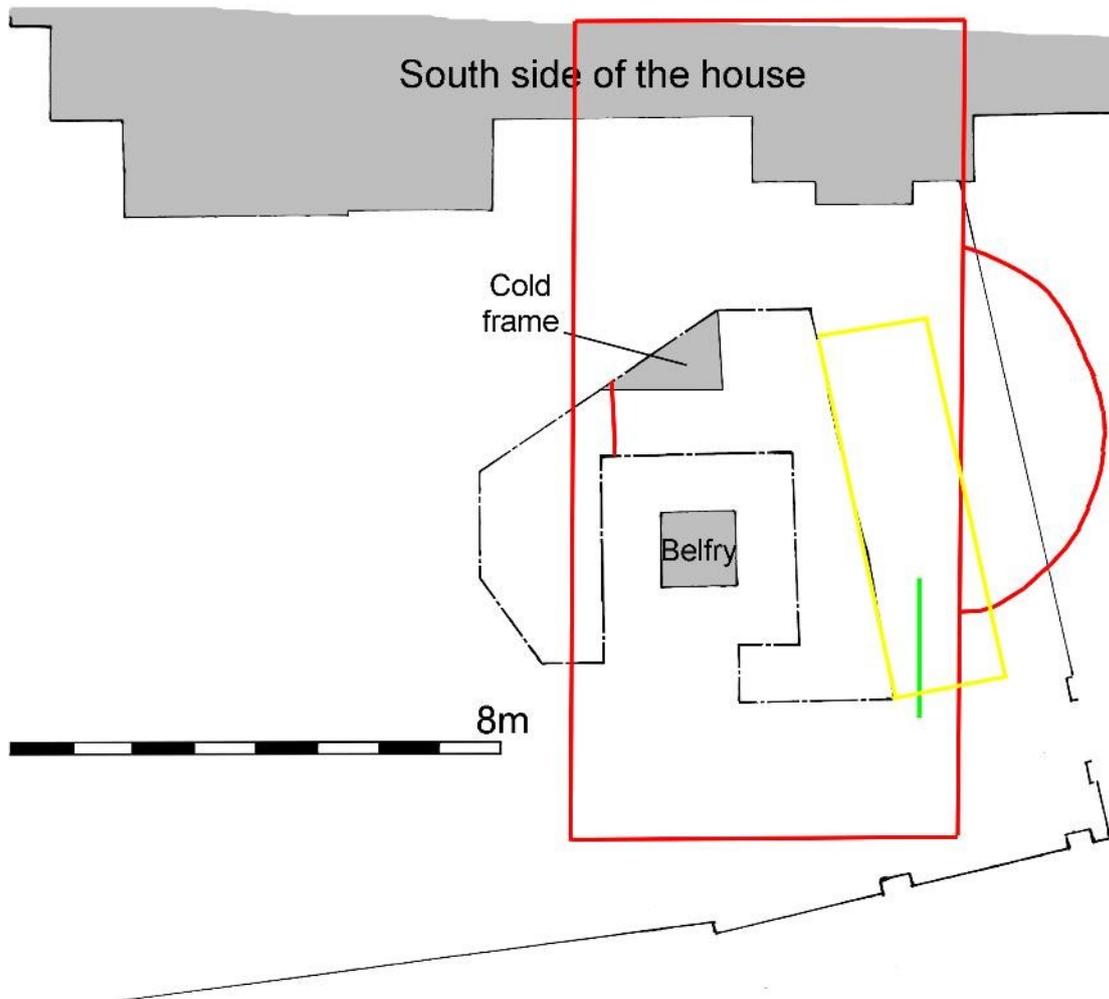


Figure 2. The garden on the south side of the present Honeywood. The broken black line is the outline of the 1997 trench. The red line is the projected position of the outer side of the wall of Honeywood 1. This is based on its position in the 1997 trench and extrapolation from the 1868 25-inch Ordnance Survey map. The green line is the estimated position of the inner side of the east wall assuming the same thickness as the west wall. The proposed trench is yellow.

4.2 Excavation methods

All the excavation will be carried out with hand tools. The following procedure will be followed:

- Mark out the trenches as defined above and place grid pins.
- Remove turf.
- Trowel up the resulting surface examine and divide into contexts if appropriate.
- Remove contexts one at a time in as near reverse order of deposition as far as can be determined. Contexts will be tested by trowelling. If they are found to be modern and of sufficient thickness the majority of the deposit will be removed with a mattock taking care to watch for any sign of change of context. The lower part of any context will be cleaned off the underlying deposit with a trowel.
- Any structure found will be cleaned with trowels brushes and other small tools. Mortar samples will be taken but otherwise the structure will be left in situ.

- Floor surfaces will generally be cleaned with small tools and left in situ. A few small cuts may be made to examine the underlying deposits and wall footings.

4.3 Finds retention policy

The following material will be discarded:

- Unworked chalk and flint
- Brick without a complete length, height or width.
- Peg tile without a surviving complete length or width.
- Broken featureless mortar not in situ

Brick will be sorted by type and the sizes and other features will be recorded.

Peg tile will be discarded after any full lengths or widths have been recorded.

4.4 Sampling

- We will retain small mortar samples from any non-modern structure.
- A specimen of any unusual bricks will be retained.

4.5 Recording the excavation

In general this will follow the Molas site manual. Specifically we will:

- Make a plan relating the trenches and the to the site grid to the house and adjacent features.
- Assign a context number to each deposit of cut and fill in a context sheet.
- Plan the tops of any pre-20th century contexts and cuts at 1:20 or exceptionally at a larger scale if there is too much detail for that scale to be adequate.
- All plans will be related to the site grid.
- Draw the excavated sections at 1:20 if there is any worthwhile detail in them (they are likely to be large cut through formerly cultivated garden soil).
- Draw all the exposed parts of any structure at a scale of 1:20 or 1:10 if there is a large amount of detail.
- Plans and contexts will be levelled to a temporary site bench mark which has been levelled to the OS bench mark on the Water Tower in West Street.
- Record any structure on masonry record sheets.
- Take colour photos as jpegs and raws using a Cannon SLR.

5. FINDS

- The 1997 excavation showed that the soil and underlying gravel is oxidised to a depth of at least 1m. This is significantly less than the depth of the proposed trench, so we are unlikely to encounter waterlogged or organic finds.
- All retained finds will be labelled by context.
- Robust items will be placed in 500 gauge plastic bags into which nylon labels will be stapled. The labels will be marked with black Bic biro.
- A stock of plastic boxes of various sizes will be provided for delicate items. Bubble wrap will also be to hand.
- The following material will be allocated special finds numbers:
 - Any unusual item.
 - All moulded stone or unusually shaped CBM.
 - Any item likely to be crucial for dating.

- Any material to be used as a reference specimen.
- Anything needed to be kept wet will be placed in a plastic box or if large covered with polyethylene.
- Delicate items will also be boxed.
- If anything needs urgent conservation we will use MoL or other conservation services.
- As far as possible all finds will be washed on site. They will then be placed in plastic seed trays to dry.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The risk assessment is a separate document.

7. STAFF

The excavation will be led by John Phillips, Field Officer of CADHAS. He will be supported by a group of about 8 experienced volunteers who have worked together as a team for many years. There will be about 12 less experienced or new volunteers drawn from the local area.

8. INSURANCE

This will be covered by CADHAS's policy with Towergate.

9. POST EXCAVATION STRUCTURE AND TIMESCALE

9.1 Closing down the excavation

- The trenches will be backfilled and reseeded or left as earth for planting.
- The grass will be cleaned up to remove dirt and loose stones.

9.2 Post excavation assessment

An assessment of the finds and records will be made within 2 months of the excavation being completed. A writing up and publishing time scale will then be prepared. Unless the site turns out to be unexpectedly complex it is anticipated that a full word processed report will be prepared within a 18 months.

9.3 Treatment of finds by type and use of specialists

The site is well drained and the trenches will largely be shallow so they are unlikely to be waterlogged and will almost certainly be oxidised.

Pottery. The excavators are familiar with the main types of early modern and recent pottery. If the material is problematic advice will be sought from Clive Orton.

Tobacco pipes. These will be catalogued by the excavators based on the type series in Atkinson and Oswald 1969 and Oswald 1975.

Bottle glass. Will be catalogued by the excavators using the type series in Dumbrell 1983.

Bricks will initially be compared with the bricks around the site and data from the local area.

Mortar will be analysed by an outside specialist if it seems likely that this will produce any useful information not obtainable by examination at low magnification.

9.4 Report writing process

- The finds catalogue will be completed
- Drawings and digital photos will be made of finds where this is worth doing
- The site drawings will be traced and scanned
- The photos will be sorted, labelled and listed
- A backup of the digital photos will be made.
- The drawings and the relationships on the context sheets will be checked against the matrix made on site.
- The records of bricks – either in situ or in rubble – will be compared to the brick data from the local area and any dating evidence noted
- The building materials, construction method and sequence of any structure will be considered from context sheets, drawings and photos.
- Mortar will be considered in the light of data from the rest of the site. It will be analysed if this seems likely to produce useful results.
- The research questions will then be reviewed in the light of the accumulated evidence.
- A report will be drawn up containing at least the information required by the GLAAS guidelines.

9.5 Publication

- A summary of the main points and an initial OASIS entry will be produced within four weeks.
- A detailed word processed report will be produced. This will be done within about 18 months unless the site is unexpectedly complex. Copies of this will be supplied to at least English Heritage and Sutton Local Studies.
- An entry will be supplied for *London Archaeologist* excavation roundup when requested.

9.6 The archive

- The finds will belong to the London Borough of Sutton as landowner and will go to their museum collection.
- The site archive will go to London Borough of Sutton Archives.

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

John Phillips, 2015

Excavations at Honeywood Carshalton, 1997. Carshalton & District History & Archaeology Society Occasional paper 7.

John Phillips, 2020

Honeywood, Carshalton: the site, the building and its owners. Carshalton & District History & Archaeology Society Occasional Paper number 15.