

## **Report on the results from a resistivity survey and test trenching in advance of a new footpath between the postern gate and the bailey buildings at Farnham Castle, Surrey**

**Background:** Farnham Castle is, in origin, a 12th century motte and bailey (List Entry Number 1012181), situated north of the town and at SU 83746 47294. The outer circuit wall is broken on the east side by a postern gate which leads to the public area of Farnham Park. While today the gate is merely a wooden door, in the medieval period there was a stone tower and drawbridge on the site. Within the circuit wall is a garden surrounding the buildings of the bailey and stone shell keep and this overlies the line of a second substantial medieval defensive ditch again surrounding the core of the castle. Just north of the area covered by this report previous monitoring (by the author) has shown that the upper levels of this ditch were filled in with rubble from the partial destruction of the keep after the Civil War.

**Introduction:** In 2015 the management at Farnham Castle applied for permission to construct a new footpath from the postern gate to the buildings of the bailey and then around the north side of the keep, with the aim of allowing public access to the keep during periods when the rest of the Castle is closed during an event such as a wedding. This report is at the request of Historic England and is the result of a Written Scheme of Investigation designed to ensure that no archaeological deposits would be disturbed by the construction of the new footpath. The investigation was limited in depth to no more than 20–30cm below the modern ground surface.

**The Investigation:** The tithe map of 1839 (fig 1) shows a footpath perhaps slightly to the south of the line of the proposed new path, the course of which is currently under grass and flower beds. The initial investigation involved a resistivity survey over and to the north of the proposed new works. The survey was carried out at 1m traverse intervals with 0.5m sample intervals and plotted using the Golden Software Surfer 12 package. The survey may show the line of the 19th century path but also shows a rectangular anomaly close to the postern gate (fig 2) and which could possibly be the corner of the medieval gate tower. Following the survey two 2 x 1m trenches were opened up, one over the site of the anomaly (trench 1; figs 2 & 3) and the second (trench 2; figs 2 & 4) nearer the centre of the garden. Both trenches showed a similar stratigraphy with a 12cm layer of turf and topsoil overlying a 9cm thick band of fine gravel mixed with soil and small fragments of tile. This layer produced a penny of George V, several sections of claypipe stem, bottle glass, white 'china' sherds and a few fragments of bone; none of the finds were earlier than 19th century in date.

In trench 1 a small sondage was opened to a total depth of 30cm and showed that the finer stone layer, in turn, overlay a 9cm-thick layer of larger stones mixed with larger pieces of brick, tile and lumps of clunch. The base of this layer lay on a deposit of lighter grey soil, but no attempt was made to investigate any deeper because of the depth restrictions imposed by the WSI. There was no sign of any edge to the deposits within either trench.

The only find of interest was in the north-east corner of trench 1 where a large earthenware pot (22cm diameter at rim; fig 3) had been set into the ground with its rim more or less at the top of the gravelly layer and its base, presumably, reaching the underlying grey soil. The pot was filled with what appeared to be topsoil and may have contained a plant of some sort. It was left *in situ*.

**Conclusions:** Both trenches confirm that the proposed new footpath will follow relatively recently disturbed ground, though it is uncertain whether this represents a footpath or results from garden cultivation. No finds were made of any earlier material, but the resistivity anomaly remains a possible indication of the presence of footings of the medieval postern gate tower. If this is the case,

these are likely to be found at a depth of 0.5–0.7m in the survey area. However, it might be worth monitoring the works for the new footpath close to the modern postern gate because the ground surface by the gate is 0.6–0.7m lower than the area covered by the survey and trenches; a terrace wall runs east/west across the garden at this point. If the resistivity anomaly is structural then any footings would be very close to the surface at this point.

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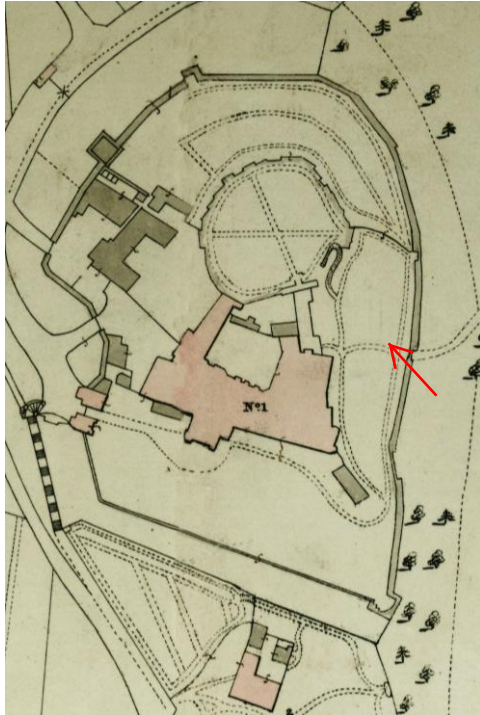


Fig 1 Tithe map 1839. Red arrow points to the footpath.

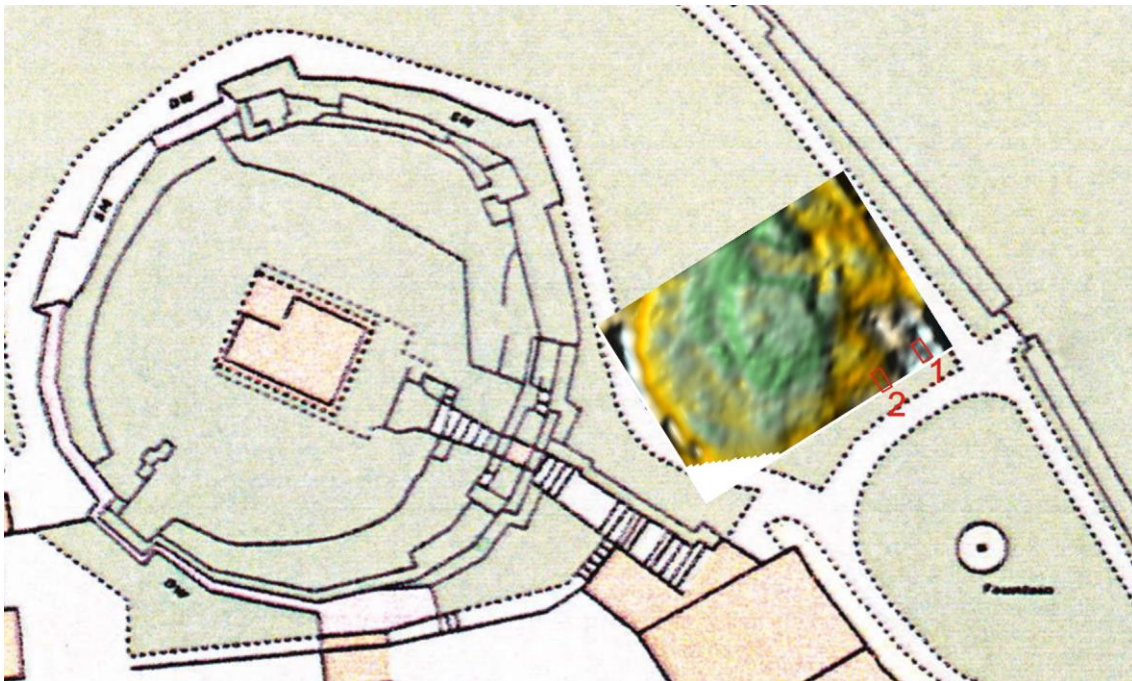


Fig 2 Resistivity survey. Grey is high resistance, yellow medium and green low. Trenches outlined in red. North is at the top





Fig 3 Trench 1 looking east showing pot set into gravel/brick deposit.



Fig 4 Trench 2 looking east showing surface of gravel.