

The Excavation of the site of Carlton Hall

For many years there has been little evidence to confirm the earlier existence of Carlton Hall, although the outline of a substantial building is shown behind Hall Terrace on the Tithe Map of 1849 and Ordnance Surveys of 1886 and 1904. The position of the building on the ground was predicted from the latter document, and with the owner's permission some limited digging was carried out in the hopes of finding foundations.

I soon discovered the top of a brick wall some 350mm wide on the western side. Using this as a datum we continued digging trenches to locate the other walls. Unfortunately, much of the brickwork has been removed but there was evidence of foundations and in one small area the foundation of a wall made of Carlton Stone was found beneath the brickwork. In other places we found a lot of fragments of charcoal and hard surfaces and profiles in the ground which might be the site of foundations and floors.

We also located a cellar some 3 metres wide by 6 metres long stretching from the western wall. This had been used as an air-raid shelter in the Second World War and was known to the land owner, but had been filled in after the war for reasons of safety. This proved to be a wise decision as we found the arched roof of a cellar collapsed. Using a full size digger, the roof brickwork and some of the infill was removed from the cellar. This exposed the entrance steps and several niches in the walls. These may have been intended to house and protect candles in the limited space of the cellar.

Whilst digging on the site we sieved out a quantity of pottery, mainly Victorian and more recent, but including some eighteenth and nineteenth century pieces perhaps contemporary with the Hall itself. More surprisingly a few pottery sherds have been identified by a professional archaeologist as Medieval, Roman and Iron-age. Our excavations have now been filled in and we will not carry out any further digging to avoid disturbing the site in the hopes of a professional dig on a larger scale sometime in the future.

Clearly, this is a very brief account of our efforts. We will be reporting in more detail on the Parish Council website and will use 'Carlton News' to alert people when our findings are available. I thank Dennis Bream, Robert Liddington, Chris Peat and Mick Pointon for their help and support.



Richard Liddington

