

## THE ROMAN VILLA AT FOLKESTONE.

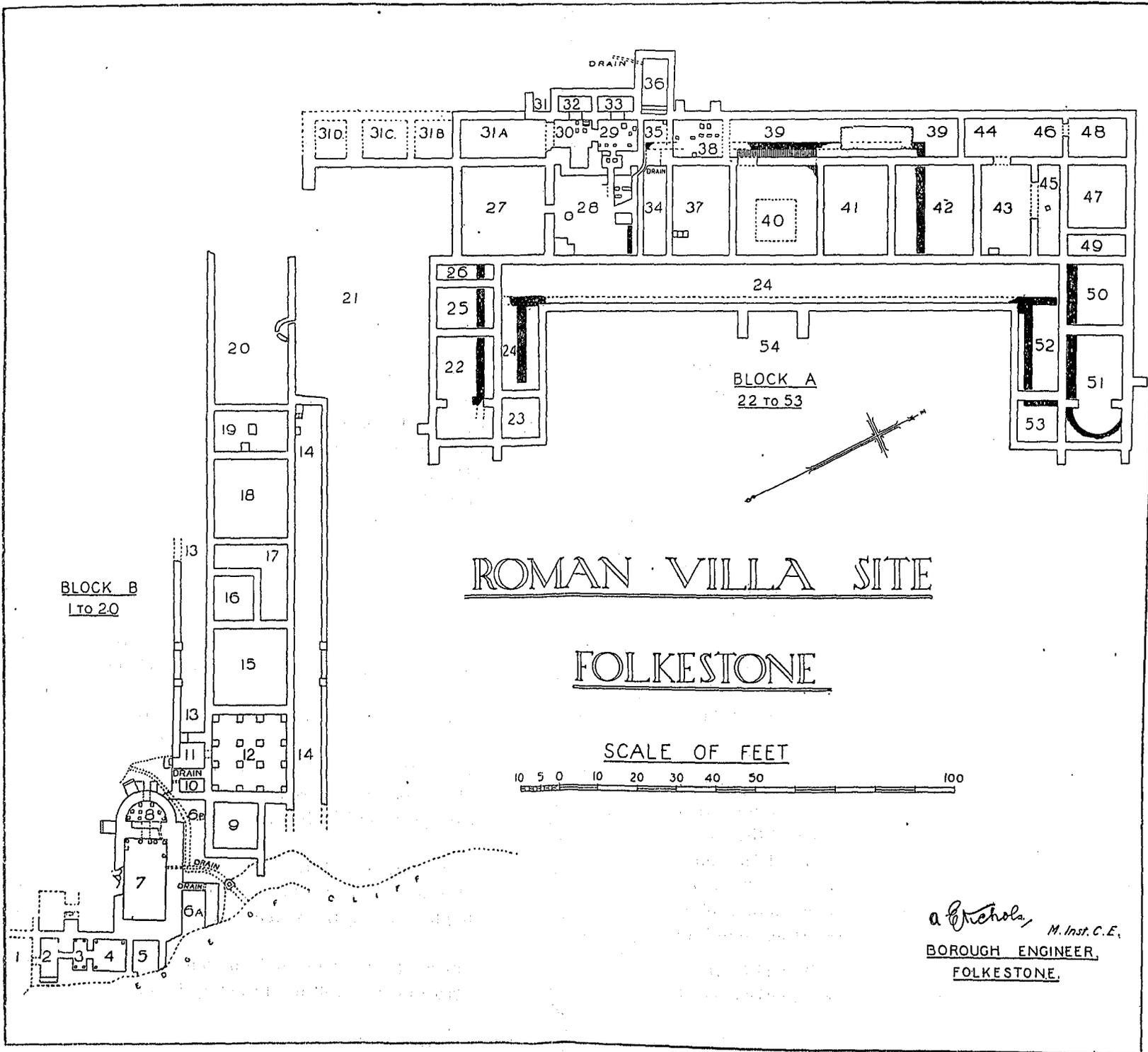
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THE Roman villa and its annexe excavated in 1924, at the expense of the Corporation of Folkestone, is situated near the edge of the cliff in front of Martello Tower No. 2 in East Wear Bay. It faces S.E. by E., and is built on the top of a formation of grey gault clay, which at this point is nearly 100 ft. thick.

Block A (see Plan) is a compromise between the courtyard and corridor types of house. A range of rooms (27—47) looks out eastward on to a long corridor (24), while below them (W.) runs another corridor (39), which looks as if it had originally extended the whole length of the building (212 ft.), but had subsequently been divided off into such rooms as 31, A, B, C, D at the south end, and 44, 46 and 48 at the north end. A moderate-sized courtyard is enclosed by comparatively short projecting wings. Block B is a clear example of the corridor house, rooms 12—20 being ranged between the two corridors (13 and 14), but it has a bath system annexed to it at its south-east corner. No structural connection could be found between the two blocks, and it is probable that an open space (21)—possibly a garden—separated the two. Either block was obviously self-contained, with living rooms, kitchen, and bath system, the better bath and hypocausts belonging to the smaller block B, but the better kitchen and dining-room to the bigger block A.

It will be convenient first briefly to describe in order the rooms of block B from 1—20, and then those of block A from 22—53. Some account of the salient "finds" will follow, and then an attempt to determine the dates of buildings on the site.

I.—Block B. No. 1 is a yard. Nos. 2—4 are a hypocaust system. No. 2 is a stoke-hole, entered from the east



ROMAN VILLA SITE

FOLKESTONE

SCALE OF FEET



*a Nichols*, M. Inst. C. E.  
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FOLKESTONE.

by two chalk steps about 5 ft. long, with a south wall 9 ft. 6 in., and west wall 4 ft. 9 in. The passage into No. 3 is 4 ft. 1 in. long and paved with flanged tiles 1 ft. 8 in. wide. In No. 3 four *pila* were represented by the bottom tiles only,  $10\frac{1}{2}$  in. square; the east and west walls, of stones, are 3 ft. 10 in. long, the north and south walls 7 ft. 10 in. A shorter passage leads in No. 4, where the bottom *pila* tiles are 16 in. by 12 in., the east and west stone walls being 8 ft. 9 in. long and north and south walls 7 ft. 10 in. Over 3 was probably a *sudatorium*, over 4 a *caldarium*; the walls were fresco-painted and the floors had fine mosaics. No. 5 was probably a cellar, with a service room above. No. 6 A (13 ft. 6 in. by 7 ft.), with a drain in its north-west corner discharging into the big drain 6 B, was probably a *lavatorium* communicating with No. 7. Its floor was of red concrete, and its north wall very solid (3 ft. 5 in. thick), consisting of big beach stones, tufa and red mortar.

Nos. 7 and 8 form an apse-ended building. The oblong (7), measuring 21 ft. by 11 ft. 4 in., is divided from the apse (8) by a stout wall. The apse is supported externally by three buttresses, two independent, the other connecting it with No. 10. The dividing wall on the apse side is recessed, probably to accommodate a hot bath, the imbrex drain from which ran out through the north wall of No. 7, probably a *tepidarium*. There were hypocausts under both, the floors over the hypocausts being *circa* 3 ft. 6 in. above the hypocaust floors. Both bathroom and *tepidarium* were faced with marble slabs and coped with marble moulding, pieces of which were found on the floor. As found, the east wall of No. 7 was 4 ft. 6 in. high, the west 6 ft. Outside the apse (W.) the top of the wall, as found, was 8 ft. 1 in. from the stone-slabbed top of a soak-away drain running round the apse from below No. 10, which is on a lower level than, and unconnected with the big drain 6 B. The arches between 7 and 8, and 8 and the stoke-hole (W.) were both found firmly sealed with masonry: that in 7 was also carefully plastered over. This latter is 3 ft. high and 2 ft. broad, its crown being composed of a double row of brick voussoirs:

the depth into the apse is  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ft. The outer arch is of about the same size, but springs from two brick piers. Outside (N.) No. 7 is a big drain system, 6 B, which ran out down the cliff to the sea. After leaving the north wall of 7 it is 4 ft. deep and 2 ft. wide in the centre, constructed with stone sides, and red flanged tiles for bottom.

No. 9 is 12 ft. by 8 ft., perhaps the quarters of a bath attendant who did the stoking for 11 and 12, 8 and 7, and 1 to 4. No. 10, with drain through its south wall, was almost certainly a latrine.

Nos. 13 and 14 are long corridors, each 7 ft. 3 in. wide, extending west and enclosing rooms 12, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19. This range of rooms ends west in a yard (20). No. 11 is a stoke-hole with arch leading through into No. 12, a big well-built hypocaust 20 ft. square, with walls of squared green sandstone blocks laid on footings of beach stones. Sixteen stout stone piers, of which twelve are built against the walls, supported the floor above: they were probably capped with big stone slabs. Above was, therefore, a well-warmed sitting-room. The stoking arch had a single voussoir of red tiles. No. 15, also 20 ft. square, has its floor on a level with the upper floor of 12, as the ground rises west. No. 16, measuring 11 ft. 7 in. by 10 ft. 4 in., is a room within No. 17. No. 18 was probably a *cenatio* next to the kitchen (19), which is 20 ft. by 10 ft. 3 in. It has two big tiled hearths, one nearly in the centre, the other against the east wall. On the floor were plentiful signs of burning, and remains of food and kitchen utensils. Against the north wall of the yard (20) are semicircular foundations with two openings, and one opening through the wall, which suggest outlets for water.

Block A.—The plan is of two long corridors (24 and 39), with rooms between, a bath-system part of which is slightly built out west, and a north and south wing partly enclosing a courtyard (54). The length of the north wing is 81 ft. 3 in., and of the south wing 80 ft. 9 in., that is, including the rooms of the main building.

Nos. 22, 23, 25, 26.—No. 22 is a long room (26 ft. by

14 ft. 6 in.), with an alcove at the east end marked off by buttresses. No. 23 may have been a *cubiculum* (lounge). The purpose of the small room 25 is uncertain, but No. 26 (14 ft. 6 in. by 3 ft. 6 in.) is a space for staircase to the storey, perhaps over the wings only. Acting as sleeper walls under the floor of the later building in 26, 25, 22 and in 24 (the south bend of corridor 24) were remains of tufa-built walls of an earlier villa. Remains of similar tufa-built walls were clearly exposed along the east wall of 24, in rooms 28, 40, 42, 50, 51, 52, and in corridor 39. It is highly probable that the tufa found in walls of the later building was re-used from the older walls when demolished.

Corridors 24 and 39 are 9 ft. 5 in. wide. Room 27 originally had a hypocaust, but this was later filled in and a new floor laid. Room 28 is a big kitchen, the floor of which has been reconstructed 1 ft. above an earlier floor. It contained a stone-built hearth in the south-east corner, a tiled hearth against the north wall, a platform and supports for a hot-water tank against the same wall, and an entrance into the stoke-hole feeding hypocausts 29 and 30. The purpose of the series of small rooms 31 A—D is uncertain. Rooms 31—33 are not connected with the hypocausts. No. 34 is a passage 19 ft. 3 in. by 5 ft. 9 in. connecting the corridor with a *lavatorium* (35) on a higher level, through which access was gained to the cold plunge bath 36, with two steps of stone covered with plaster at the east end. Its drain was in the south-west corner.

Room 38 also was at some period made into a hypocaust. Rooms 37, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45 are all *circa* 21 ft. 6 in. east to west, but of varying widths. The purposes of these must be matter of conjecture, but No. 40, opposite the entrance steps from the courtyard, with its 10 ft. square good mosaic pavement, was certainly the best room, probably a *cenatio*, with an entrance from corridor 39 in its south-west corner. The pavement (about a half of which was found intact) was of geometrical pattern, with four corner circles and one central circle. No. 45 looks like a passage, and 49 is a staircase space similar to 26. No. 51 is similar to 22, but

at one time seems to have had a tufa-built apse at the east end, squared off later to correspond with 22.

II.—The “finds,” though perhaps not numerous, are interesting.

*Coins.*—In all 33 coins are recorded in connection with this site, 7 British and 26 Roman. The British comprise one gold, three bronze and three small tin. The gold coin is of the Kentish type, plain one side and with a crude horse on the other. Two of the bronzes are inscribed SVE, one with an additional TVSD. If this represents a British king, he has not before been recorded. Of the Roman coins a burnt silver denarius of Augustus (Caius and Lucius Cæsars) is a chance survival on the site. Other emperors and empresses represented are Domitian (2), Trajan, Hadrian (2), Commodus, Severus Alexander, Philippus I., Gallienus, Aurelianus, Theodora, Constantine I. (7), Crispus, Constantius (2), Constantius II. (3), Magnentius (2).

*Samian Pottery.*—This pottery is mainly from Lezoux, Rheinzabern or Trèves. Potters' marks are those of Æstivus, Albinus, Anailus, Attius, Avitus, Borillus, Catullus, Cinnamus, Congius, Criciro, Cucillus, Doeccus, Licinius, Martius, Musicus, Quintus and Sacroticus. A few decorated pieces are of the first century, but the majority are of the Hadrian-Antonine period. A few pieces of Castor Ware were found, and a large quantity of fragments of buff and grey wares. Five pre-Roman (La Tène) burial urns containing burnt bones and trinkets were found: two of these were cordoned on the shoulder, one being of the Aylesford type of pedestalled urn. A pretty brown carinated bowl of late Celtic type deserves special notice. Several bronze fibulæ, three of them British, one silver fibula (British), a silver heart-shaped armlet, a neat bronze screw-bolt with perfect thread, a bronze corslet stud and bell-shaped harness ornament (?), a few bronze rings, an iron ploughshare, two iron keys, a stilus, a knife, and a few tools of iron are among the metal objects. Among bone implements are hairpins, a bone spindle, and a good specimen of *cochleare*. Historically, the

most important finds are tiles with three different types of the stamp of the British Fleet, the mark being previously known at Dover, Lympne, Pevensey, Boulogne and Desures. The two Folkestone round stamps, lettered CLASIS . BRIT. and B<sub>L</sub><sup>C</sup>R are, I believe, unique. The third, with raised letters CL . BR in a sunken panel, is a more finished stamp than most of those found elsewhere. Several earthenware bellows' nozzles were found; and three complete sections of earthenware water-pipes, with spigotted ends, are somewhat rare.

III.—*Dating.* The second building of block A and block B appear to be synchronous. The walls are similar, *i.e.*, footings of beach stones and upper courses of squared local green-sand. In both, Samian of the late first century and of Hadrianic times are common: the distribution of coins from Domitian to Magnentius is fairly even in both blocks. From this it may be inferred that there was continuous occupation of both blocks from the end of the first century to the second half of the fourth, roughly, from A.D. 90 to 386. The earlier building in A must therefore have been prior to A.D. 90. Its construction is peculiar: the walls are built of tufa blocks on footings of big flints and ironstones. Elsewhere tufa in the upper parts of walls or for vaulting is well known in Romano-British buildings, but not in the lower courses. It is probable that the earlier villa was built soon after, or perhaps before the Claudian invasion.

It is difficult to describe so big a site in a brief article. I hope, therefore, it may be permitted to state that further detail will be found in *Roman Folkestone* (London, Methuen and Co., 1925). The "finds" may be seen in the Public Museum at Folkestone.