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T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

Little London Road, Silchester,
Hampshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

for English Villages Housing Association

by Andy Taylor

Site Code LLS 01/106
(SU 6305 6145)

**Little London Road,
Silchester, Hampshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for English Villages Housing Association**

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code LLS 01/106

November 2001

Summary

Site name: Little London Road, Silchester, Hampshire

Grid reference: SU 6250 6148

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 21st–23rd November 2001

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: LLS 01/106

Area of site: 0.25 hectares

Summary of results: A single gully of late Iron Age or early Roman date, 6 ditches of Iron Age to early Roman date and a pit which may be late Iron Age. One other pit was undated.

Monuments identified: A late Iron Age or early Roman gully, five ditches of the same date, one Roman ditch, and two pits, one of which may be late Iron Age or early Roman, the other was undated.

Location and reference of archive: The site archive is currently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd, 47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5NR and will be deposited with Hampshire Museum Service in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 30/11.01
	Steve Preston ✓ 29.11.01

Little London Road, Silchester, Hampshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor

Report 01/106

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Little London Road, Silchester, Hampshire (SU 6250 6148) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Ian Gillespie, Development Manager, of English Villages Housing Association, West Regional Office, 9 Langley Court, Beedon, Nr Newbury, Berkshire, RG20 8RY.

An application for planning permission is being considered for the construction of Housing Association houses at Little London Road, Silchester. As it is possible that the development area may contain archaeological remains, a programme of archaeological work in the form of a field evaluation has been requested.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Ian Wykes, Senior Archaeologist with Hampshire County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor, Steve Hammond, Jo Pine and Aaron Clements on the 21st-23rd November 2001. Steve Preston provided comment on the significance of the site. The site code is LLS 01/106.

Location, topography and geology

The site covers an area of c. 0.25 hectares and is currently used as farmland and is located on the southern outskirts of Silchester village. The site lies close to the route of the Portway Roman Road, which ran between Silchester and Old Sarum (Margary 1955) and is 1.5km to the south west of the Iron Age and Roman town of Silchester (Fig. 1). The site lies on a small plateau which drops fairly sharply to the south and west. According to geological maps (BGS 1971), the underlying geology is Pebble Gravel and this was encountered in all trenches though occasional bands of clay were observed. The site lies at a height of c.94m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The site lies within an area of high archaeological potential, with aerial photography showing a number of linear cropmarks in the adjacent fields to the east may continue in to the proposal site. As previously mentioned, the site lies close to the route of the Portway Roman Road, which ran between Silchester (*Calleva Atrebatum*) and

Old Sarum (Margary 1955). The site lies 1.5km south-west of the Iron Age and Roman town of Silchester, which has been extensively excavated, most recently (and still ongoing) by Professor M Fulford, and is consequently among the best-known Roman towns in the country (*inter alii*, Boon, 1974; Fulford 1985; Fulford and Timby, 2000). It was also an important pre-Roman centre, the *oppidum* there dating from the late years of the 1st century BC, having a mint (Fulford, 1985; 1986) and becoming one of the most developed of the British *oppida* (Millett, 1990, 28; Fulford 1987) on the eve of conquest. This makes Silchester one of the key sites for understanding the rapid changes of the first centuries BC to AD, and key questions today revolve around the varying relationships economic, political, social and even environmental) between the central place and its hinterland (Condrón, Perring and Whyman, 2000; Condrón, 2000).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. The brief for the evaluation required the examination of c. 200sq. m on the eastern side of the site. It was, therefore, proposed to dig 7 trenches, each 20m long and 1.6m wide using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless bucket. All machining was to be carried out under constant archaeological supervision. The trenches were to be located as close as possible to their originally intended position. Where certain or possible archaeological features were present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using the appropriate hand tools and sufficient features and deposits were to be excavated to satisfy the terms of the brief. This was to be carried out in a manner that did not compromise the integrity of any archaeological features that warrant preservation in-situ or might better be dealt with under conditions pertaining to full excavation. All spoilheaps were to be constantly monitored for finds.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Results

The positions of the trenches are shown on Fig 2. The geology was consistent in all of the trenches excavated, and comprised turf and topsoil overlying a dirty gravelly subsoil which overlaid orangey brown natural gravels, which had occasional bands of clay running through it.

Archaeological features were found in all trenches apart from Trench 1. The monitoring of the spoilheaps only revealed modern brick within the ploughsoil and a nail stem from Trench 4 (not retained).

Trench 2

At the south west end of Trench 2 was a small gully (9) on an east-west alignment. The gully was 0.80m wide, 0.22m deep and ran across the width of the trench. It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base and was cut from beneath the subsoil. A 0.70m wide slot excavated across the feature revealed a single fill of mid grey, gravelly clay with frequent inclusions of gravel (58). The gully contained three sherds of pottery dating from the 1st century BC or AD. A possible pit 10 was also recorded but not excavated.

Trench 3

At the eastern end of Trench 3 was a ditch (2) on a north north west- south south east alignment. The ditch was 1.25m wide, 0.30m deep and had moderately sloping sides onto a concave base. It was cut from beneath the subsoil. A 0.45m wide slot was excavated across the feature revealing a single fill of greyish orange clay with occasional gravel inclusions (51). After extending the slot for more dating evidence it was revealed that this was fact the terminal end of the ditch and did not cross the whole width of the trench as had been previously thought. The ditch contained 7 very small sherds of pottery dating from the early 1st century AD. Further along the eastern end of the trench was a possible pit 11, which was not excavated and is therefore of unknown date.

Trench 4

At the northern end of Trench 4 was a ditch (7) on an east-west alignment crossing the width of the trench. The ditch was 1.80m wide, 0.20m deep and had moderately sloping sides onto a flat base. It was cut from beneath the subsoil. A 0.50m wide slot was excavated across the feature revealing a single fill of mid grey clayey gravel with frequent gravel inclusions (56). The ditch contained three sherds of Roman greyware of 2nd-century date.

Next to Ditch (7) was a possible driveway (8) crossing the width of the trench. It was 5.15m wide, 0.20m deep and had gently sloping sides and an irregular base. It was cut from beneath the subsoil. A 0.70m wide slot was excavated across the feature revealing a single fill of mid grey gravelly clay with frequent gravel inclusions (57). The feature contained seven sherds of the same Roman greyware as in (7).

Trench 5

Towards the northern end of Trench 5 was a ditch (4) on an east-west alignment crossing the width of the trench. The ditch was 1.10m wide, 0.45m deep and had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. It was cut from

beneath the topsoil. A 0.60m wide slot was excavated across the feature revealing a single fill of greyish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of gravel (53). The ditch could be seen to continue into Trench 6 (5). The ditch contained a single sherd of Roman pottery.

Trench 6

Towards the middle of Trench 6 was a shallow pit or ditch (3) on a north east– south west alignment crossing the width of the trench. The feature was 1.20m wide, 0.10m deep and had shallow gently sloping sides onto a flat base. It was cut from below the subsoil. A 1.10m wide slot was excavated across the feature revealing a fill of dark grey silty clay with occasional inclusions of gravel (52). The feature contained 19 sherds of pottery including flint-tempered of the early 1st century AD, and imported Dressel 1 or 2–4 type *amphora* which may be earlier. These *amphorae* were probably imported in the final years BC but this type of material was often reused and long-lived and commonly appears in later deposits.

Next to ditch (3) was a ditch (5) on a north east- south west alignment crossing the width of the trench. The ditch was 1.30m wide, 0.25m deep and had moderately sloping sides onto a concave base. A 0.50m wide slot was dug across the feature revealing a fill of mid grey silty clay with occasional inclusions of gravel (54). The slot did not contain any finds. This ditch is almost certainly the same as the one revealed in Trench 5 (4).

Towards the north-western end of Trench 6 was a ditch (6) on a north east- south west alignment crossing the width of the trench. The feature was 1.30m wide, 0.30m deep and had moderately sloping sides onto a concave base. It was cut from beneath the subsoil. A 0.65m wide slot was excavated across the feature revealing a fill of mid grey brown gravelly clay with frequent inclusions of gravel (55). The slot contained 4 sherds of late Iron Age (1st-century BC–AD) pottery.

At the south-eastern end of the trench was a pit 12, which was not excavated. However, three sherds of pottery of the early 1st century AD were recovered from the *surface of the feature*.

Trench 7

At c.6m from the south western end of Trench 7 was a ditch (1) on an east-west alignment crossing the width of the trench. The ditch was 1.40m wide, 0.40m deep and had moderately sloping sides onto a pointed base. It was cut from below the topsoil. A slot 0.50m wide was excavated across the feature revealing a fill of light grey, brown silty, sandy clay with frequent gravel inclusions (50). The slot contained six sherds of pottery dating from the early 1st century AD, and five fragments of burnt flint.

Finds

Pottery by J R Timby

A small assemblage of 52 sherds of pottery weighing 489g was recovered from six trenches. A quantified summary is provided in Table 1. The group contains material of late Iron Age and Roman date broadly spanning the early 1st century AD through to the 2nd century.

The greatest concentration of wares came from Trench 6. This also produced the earliest material, with a mixture of coarse flint-tempered Silchester ware, wheel-turned grog-tempered ware and seven sherds from an Italian *amphora* (Dressel 1-2/4 sp.). The grog-tempered ware on analogy with other pottery from Silchester is likely to date from around AD10-25; the amphora may be an earlier import. Trenches 2, 3 and 7 similarly produced Silchester ware and grog-tempered ware and would appear to be contemporary with Trench 6.

The ten sherds from Trenches 4 and 5 are slightly later in date. Trench 4 produced eight sherds, which appear to be from the same vessel, a grey Alice Holt jar with a burnished lattice decoration. Trench 5 produced a single jar in a black burnished ware, probably another Alice Holt product. A 2nd century date might fit these pieces.

Table 1: Summary of pottery

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Feature</i>	<i>Fill</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>Date</i>
2	9	58	3	74	1st century BC-AD
3	2	51	7	15	early 1st AD
4	7	56	2	19	2nd AD
4	8	57	7	72	2nd AD
5	4	53	1	6	2nd AD
6	3	52	19	205	early 1st AD
6	6	55	4	37	1st century BC-AD
6	12	top	3	9	early 1st AD
7	1	50	6	52	early 1st AD
<i>TOTAL</i>			<i>52</i>	<i>489</i>	

Burnt Flint

Five fragments of burnt flint were recovered from ditch (1) in Trench 7 and weighed 120 grams.

Conclusion

The evaluation has been successful in locating a number of datable archaeological deposits. A gully which became infilled in the 1st century BC or AD was revealed in Trench 2. Trench 3 contained the terminal end of an early 1st-century AD ditch and a possible pit of unknown date. In Trench 4 was a Roman ditch, which was cut by a possible Roman driveway. An early Roman ditch was found in Trench 5 and almost certainly continues into Trench 6. Also in Trench 6 were another ditch and a pit, both of marginally earlier date (perhaps in the early

first century AD). Trench 7 revealed another ditch of this date. The aim of the evaluation was to determine if remains of a Roman settlement, observed in the adjacent field as a series of linear cropmarks by aerial photography, continued into the proposed development site. From the archaeological deposits revealed it appears that the Roman settlement did continue into the site and from the density of deposits in such a relatively small area covered it would seem to have been a fairly large area. Significantly, the pottery assemblage spans the crucial Iron Age–Roman transitional period (mid 1st century) and extends into the 2nd century. The presence of sherds from an imported *amphora* might also extend the chronology backwards into the 1st century BC (if this is a Dressel 1 type rather than 2–4, and possibly so even if 2–4), although these sherds in particular are notoriously misleading as dating tools, often appearing in deposits much later than the known production dates of the ceramics. The presence of these sherds, if not residual, would also hint at a site of some status.

This site would thus seem to offer very significant potential to address important research questions relating to a crucial period in the development of British society, building on the important work in progress in Silchester itself and offering a rural perspective to set beside the predominantly urban evidence so far available.

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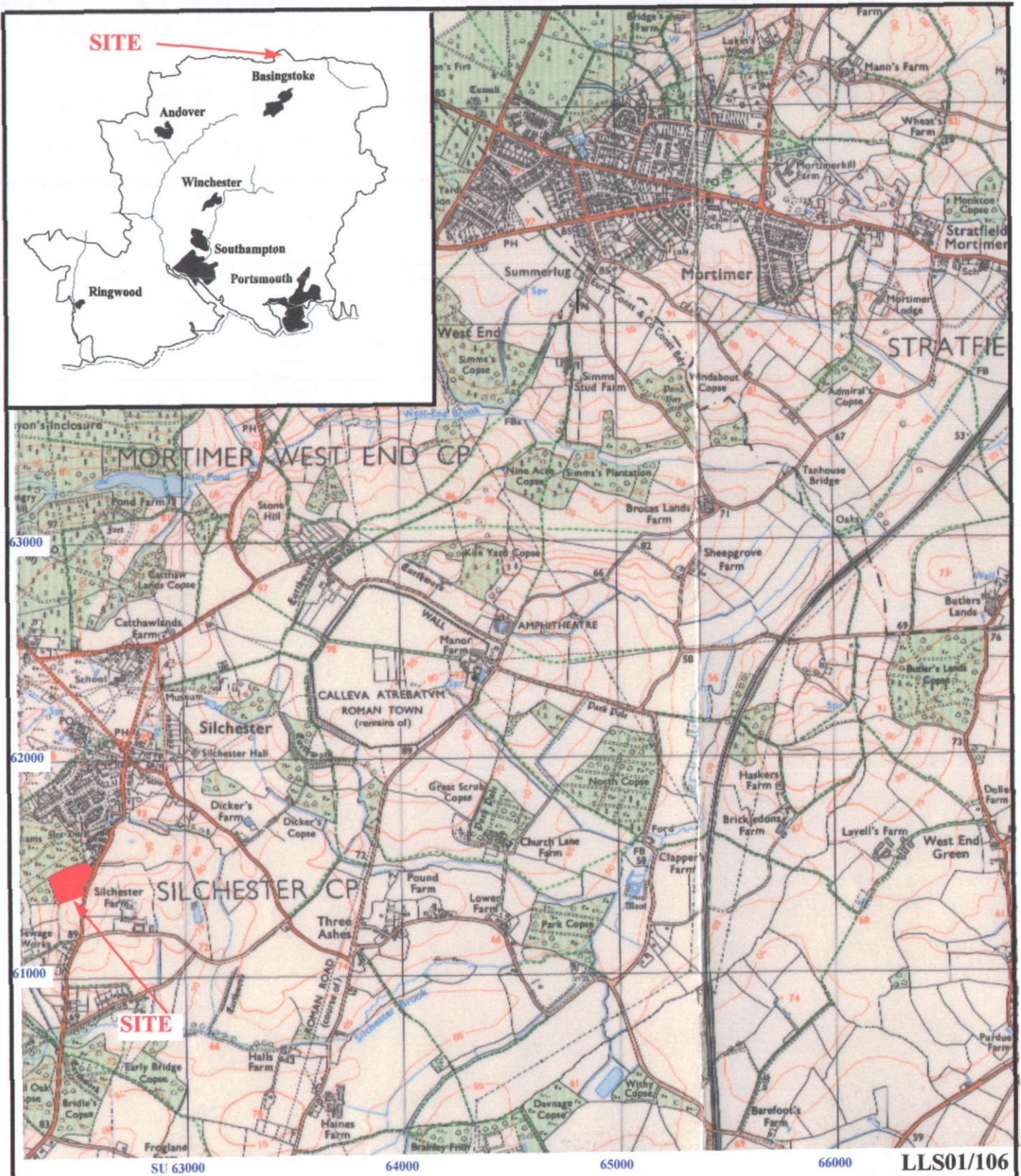
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APPENDIX 1: Trench details
 0m at S or W end

<i>Trench No.</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	21.20	1.50	0.41	0.00-0.35m topsoil; 0.35m+ orangey brown sandy gravels with bands of London clay running through.
2	19.90	1.50	0.60 at SW 0.46 at NE	SW- 0.00-0.40m topsoil; 0.40m+ London clay with patchy sandy gravels. NE- 0.00-0.39m topsoil; 0.39m+ London clay with patchy sandy gravels. Gully 9
3	23.20	1.50	0.40m at W 0.54m at E	W- 0.00-0.35m topsoil; 0.35m+ orangey brown gravels. E- 0.00- 0.40m topsoil; 0.40- 0.49m gravelly subsoil; 0.49m+ orangey brown gravels. Ditch 2 and unexcavated pit.
4	22.00	1.50	0.36 at S 0.71 at N	S- 0.00- 0.29m topsoil; 0.29m+ orangey brown gravels with bands of London clay. N- 0.00- 0.35m topsoil; 0.35- 0.70m gravelly Subsoil; 0.70m+ orangey brown gravels with bands of London clay. Ditch 7 and possible driveway 8.
5	22.35	1.50	0.35	0.00- 0.30m topsoil; 0.30m+ orangey brown gravels. Ditch 4
6	22.10	1.50	0.66 at S 0.41 at N	S- 0.00- 0.40m topsoil; 0.40- 0.65m gravelly subsoil; 0.65m+ orangey brown gravels. N- 0.00- 0.36m topsoil; 0.36m+ orangey brown gravels. Ditches 3, 5 and 6 and an unexcavated pit.
7	22.30	1.50	0.49	0.00- 0.39m topsoil; 0.39m+ orangey brown gravels. Ditch 1.

Appendix 2: Catalogue of features

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Feature</i>	<i>Fill</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>
7	1	50	Ditch	early 1st AD
3	2	51	Ditch terminal	early 1st AD
6	3	52	Pit/ditch	early 1st AD
5	4	53	Ditch	2nd AD
6	5	54	Ditch	-
6	6	55	Ditch	1st century BC-AD
4	7	56	Ditch	2nd AD
4	8	57	Droeway	2nd AD
2	9	58	Gully	1st century BC-AD
2	10	-	Pit	-
3	11	-	Pit	-
6	12	-	Pit	early 1st AD



Little London Road, Silchester,
Hampshire, 2001

Figure 1. Location of site within Silchester and Hampshire.

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Little London Road, Silchester, Hampshire, 2001

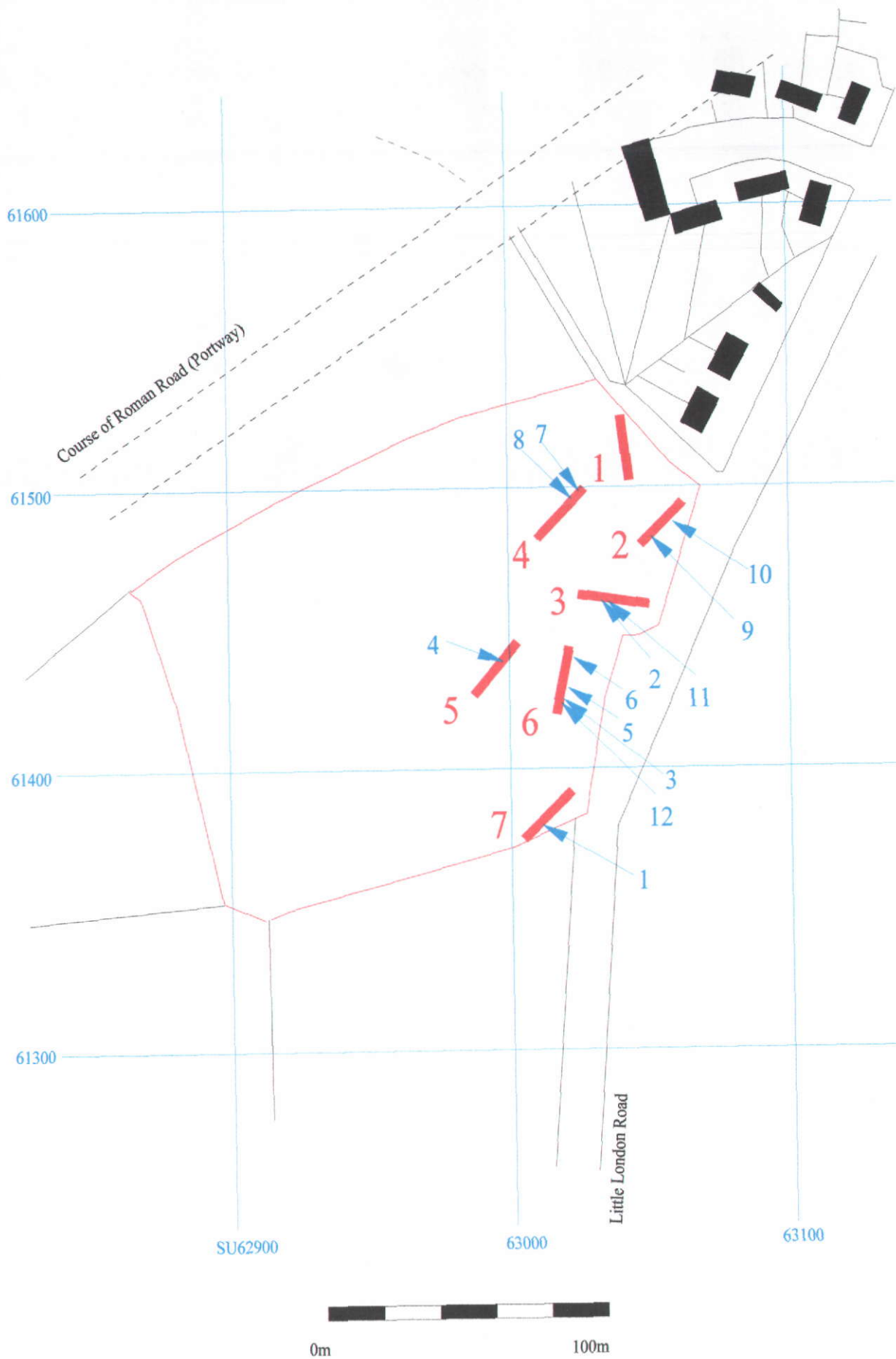


Figure 2. Plans of trenches showing archaeological features.

Little London Road, Silchester, Hampshire, 2001

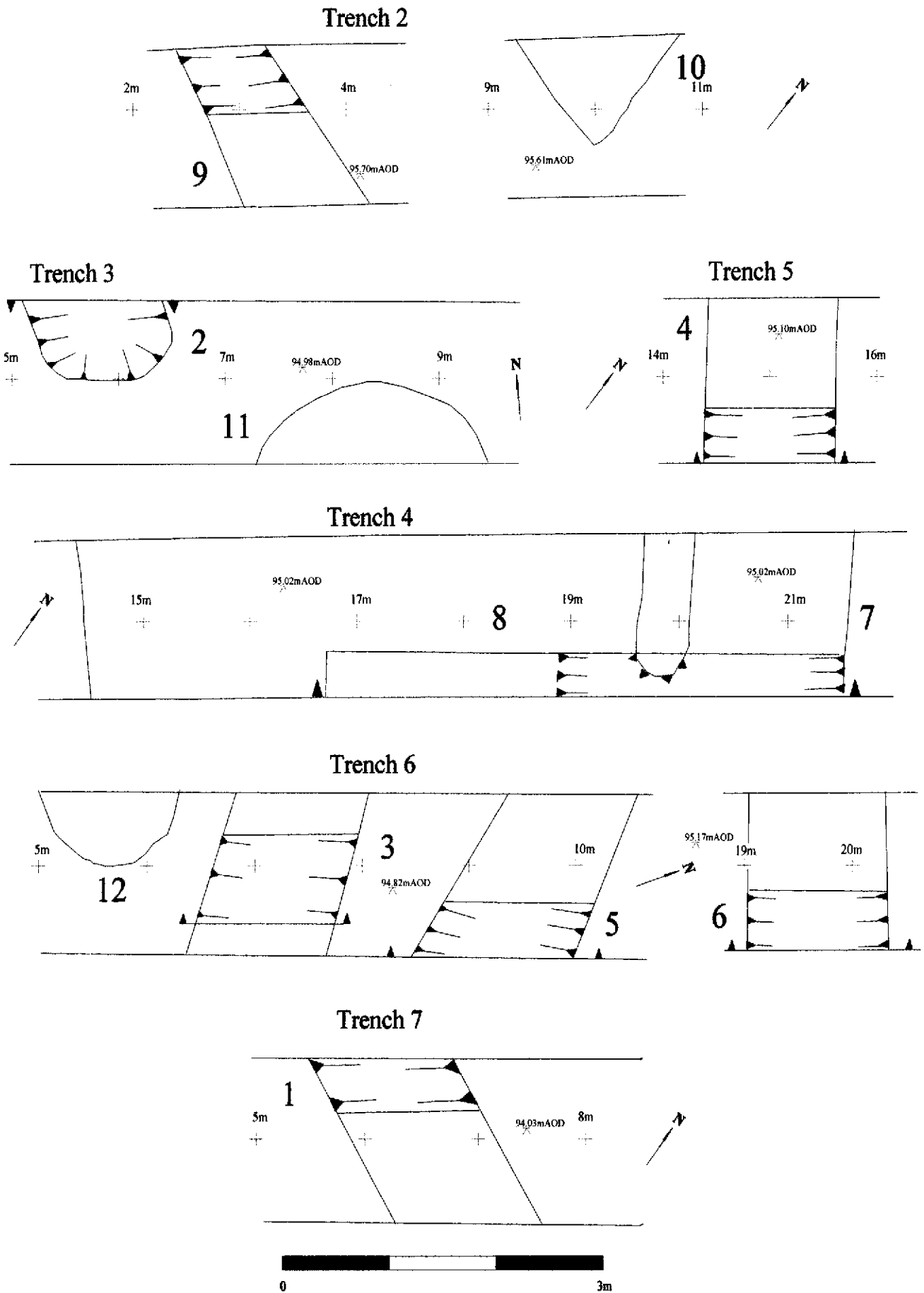


Figure 3. Plans of trenches showing archaeological features.

Little London Road, Silchester, Hampshire, 2001

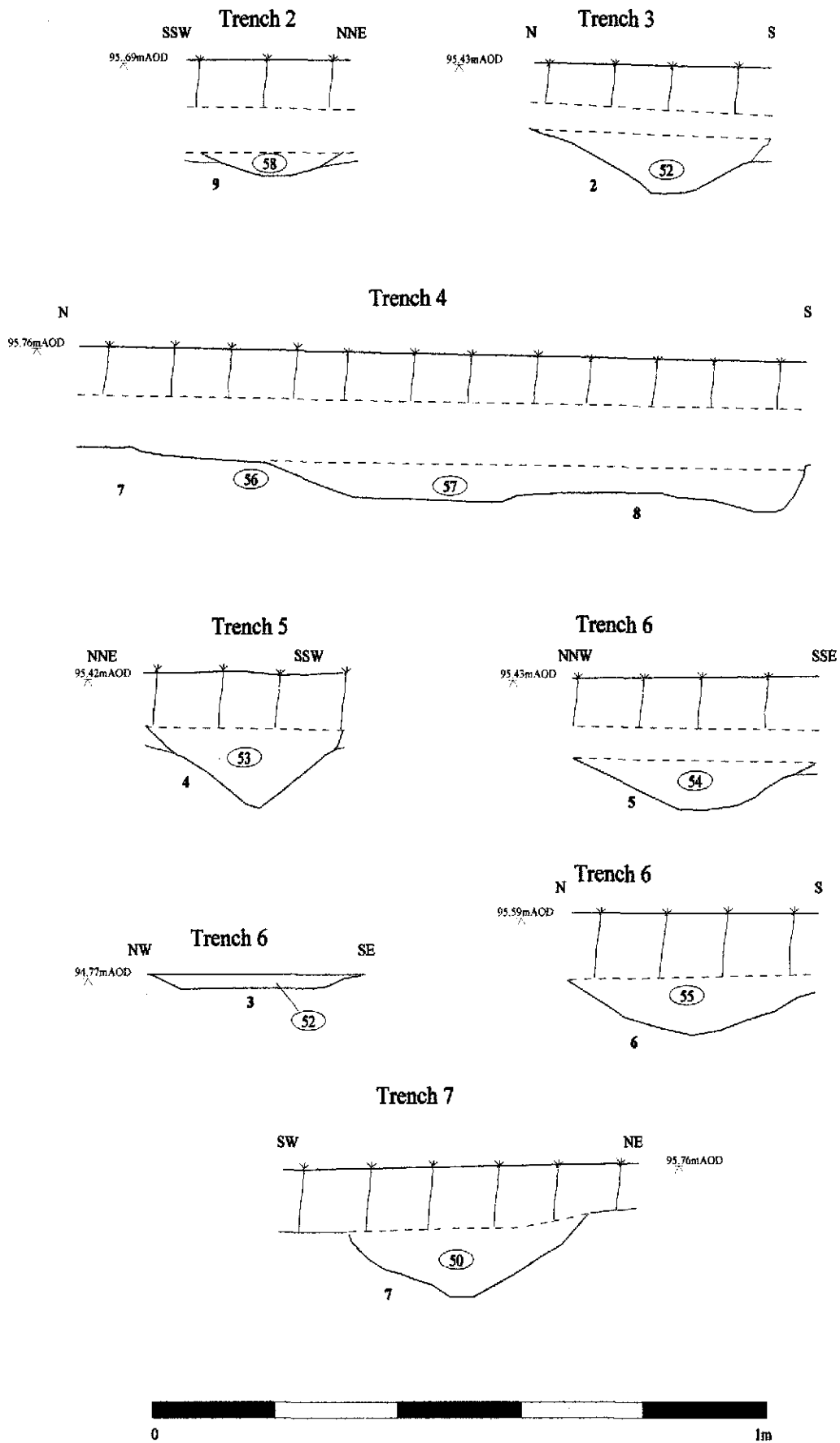


Figure 4. Sections.



Plate 1. Trench 7 looking north east, scales: 2m, 1m and 0.50m.



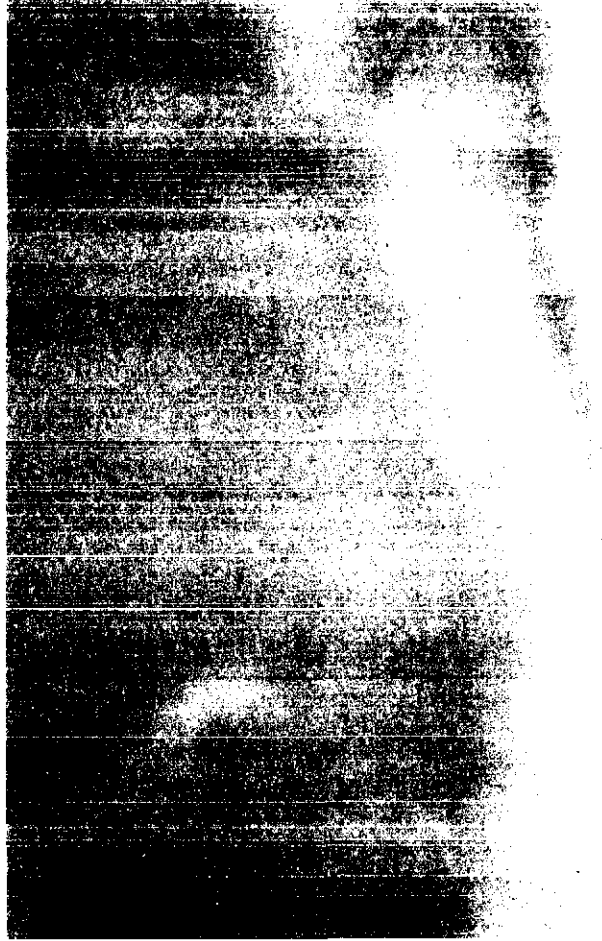
Plate 2. Trench 7. Ditch 1 looking north west, scales: 1m and 0.5m.

TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	AD 0 BC 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle	1700 BC
Bronze Age Early	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10,000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	50,000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70,000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC



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T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**A Late Iron Age to Early Roman Enclosure at
Little London Road,
Near Silchester, Hampshire**

Draft Publication Report

by Helen Moore

Site Code LLS01/106

(SU6250 6148)

**Little London Road, Silchester,
Hampshire**

**Draft Publication Report
For English Villages Housing Association**

by Helen Moore

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code LLS01/106

November 2004

Summary

Site name: Little London Road, Silchester, Hampshire

Grid reference: SU 6250 6148

Site activity: Evaluation, Excavation, Watching brief

Date and duration of project: evaluation November 2001, excavation April–May 2003

Project manager: Helen Moore

Site supervisor: Helen Moore and Andy Taylor

Site code: LLS01/106

Area of site: whole site 2.5ha, c. 1ha evaluated, 2525 sq m excavated

Summary of results: Evaluation and excavation on land to the south of Little London near Silchester, Hampshire, revealed an enclosure and ditch system dating from the 1st century BC to the 1st century AD. The enclosure was possibly rectangular in plan, with one definite entrance on its northern side. It contained pottery and smithing waste. A series of other ditches were also excavated dating from the same period, possibly associated with field systems and stock enclosures.

Monuments identified: Iron Age and Roman Field system

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Hampshire Museums Service in due course, with accession code A2003.69.

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A Late Iron Age to Early Roman Enclosure at Little London Road, near Silchester, Hampshire

By Helen Moore

Summary

Evaluation and excavation work on land to the south of Little London near Silchester, Hampshire, revealed an enclosure and ditch system dating from the 1st century BC to the 1st century AD. The enclosure was possibly rectangular in plan, with one definite entrance on its northern side. It contained pottery and smithing waste. A series of other ditches were also excavated dating from the same period, possibly associated with field systems and stock enclosures.

Introduction

Background

Between November 2001 and May 2003 a programme of archaeological works was undertaken by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd on agricultural land at Little London Road, Silchester in Hampshire. A planning application (no BDB/S4536) was submitted to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council by English Villages Housing Association, for the construction of ten, two- and three-bedroom dwellings with parking and associated works. Prior to granting planning permission, an archaeological evaluation was requested to ascertain if any archaeological remains existed on the site, in accordance with *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990). The archaeological evaluation was undertaken in November 2001.

The site lies on the south-western edge of the village of Silchester in a field on the west side of Little London Road (SU 6250 6148)(Fig. 8.1). The field was grassland when the archaeological work was carried out, but in previous years had been ploughed. The field lies on a plateau at approximately 95mAOD and slopes down quite steeply towards the Silchester brook to the south and west. Pamber forest bounds the site on its western side, Flex Ditch cottages stand to the north of the field, and Little London Road runs along the east side. The underlying geology is pebble gravel, which was a mixed orange-brown and a pale dirty grey in colour (BGS 1946). The site had an uninterrupted view of the hills to the south looking towards Basingstoke (Pl. 8.1).

The field investigations were carried out to specifications approved by Mr Ian Wykes, then Senior Archaeologist with Hampshire County Council. Seven evaluation trenches were excavated during November 2001, each 20m long by 1.6m wide, and dug using a JCB-type machine fitted with a ditching bucket (Taylor 2001). The trenches were positioned at the higher end of the field on the plateau where it was more likely that archaeological features would be encountered. All seven trenches produced archaeological features, dating from the 1st century BC to the 3rd or 4th centuries AD. The majority of the archaeological features produced pottery dating from the 1st century BC to the 1st century AD, which is an important period, particularly for understanding the early development of the late Iron Age *oppidum* and landscape around Silchester.

As a consequence of finding archaeology dating to this transitional period, an excavation was requested by Mr Wykes, and this took place during April and May 2003. The excavation area was located again on the plateau, but within a defined area where the footprints of the new buildings were to be placed (Fig. 8.2). The excavation area was roughly a square of approximately 2525 sq m. The underlying natural undulated greatly, and there were areas where a large depth of subsoil (up to 0.80m), had accumulated above the gravel.

Following the completion of the excavation, a watching brief was undertaken on a sewer pipe trench which extended from the excavation area down the hill towards the sewage works to the south of the site. This encountered two ditches, a buried soil and a probable posthole, which all produced pottery dating from the 1st century BC to the 1st century AD.

The evaluation was supervised by Andy Taylor, and the excavation was supervised by Helen Moore. The archaeological work was funded by English Villages Housing Association. The archive is currently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd, but will be deposited with Hampshire Museum Services in due course (accession code A2003.69). The site code is LLS01/106.

Archaeological Background

The site lies within 1.5km of the Iron Age and Roman town of Silchester (*Calleva Atrebatum*), which has been extensively excavated and documented during the last century. Particularly in the last twenty years, work undertaken by Professor Fulford at Reading University, which is still ongoing, is shedding new light on the early development of the town and surrounding landscape (Fulford 1984; Fulford 1987; Fulford and Timby, 2000). A brief synopsis is therefore only necessary here, as there is a wealth of literature available for reference. Field survey work has also been carried out on the extra-mural settlement within 500 metres of the Roman defences by between 1969 and 1981 (Corney 1984), and has revealed intensive activity, with evidence of enclosures, stone buildings, field systems and ribbon-development along roads dating from the Iron Age and Roman periods.

The town of *Calleva* itself dates from the pre-Roman Iron Age when earthworks enclosing the site and dividing its environs were constructed. There are several earthworks in the area of the present site thought to date from this period, to the south and west of Silchester (Fig. 8.1). Flex ditch, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (No 24331), lies to the north of the site, and was a substantial linear earthwork up to 25m wide with a maximum depth of c.6m, possibly designed to restrict access from the south to the ridge of higher ground to the north. The Roman road between *Calleva* and *Sorviodunum* (Old Sarum) known as The Portway (Margary 1973, route 4b) either truncates or passes close to the south side of the ditch at its north-eastern end. This road runs close to the site on its western side, and crosses Pamber Forest to the west.

On lower ground to the south are two sections of linear earthworks (SAM 24333) separated by approximately 70m, and aligned from the south-west to the north-east. Composed of a ditch and bank, with the ditch up to 10m wide in places, the earthworks extend for 326m and 274m respectively. Another three sections of linear earthwork (SAM 24335) extend to the east of these, and a short curving bank and ditch (SAM 24334) lies between the aforementioned earthworks. Another curving ditch and bank extends towards the site from the north-east, from the earthwork immediately outside the town at Rampier Copse. All of these, presumably defensive, earthworks form an impressive system that is thought to date from the 1st century BC, although there

is a lack of material evidence to prove this conclusively.

A hoard of thirteen coins (base-silver *stater*s of the Durotriges) which date from the late Iron Age, were found to the south-east of the site in 2000 by a metal detectorist within OS grid square SU6361 (information from Hampshire AHBR).

The Archaeology

The site was stripped using a 360° excavator, during April 2003. Initially it seemed that there was very little archaeology present on the site, as the natural gravels were very mottled and pale in colour, and there were no obvious archaeological features truncating the natural. As the site weathered however, it became apparent that a series of linear ditches extended across the site, with very leached fills, which made their identification difficult. Some of the ditches became paler as the site weathered, and were paler than the natural gravels they were dug through. Other fills were slightly dirtier than the natural gravel, so it was possible to distinguish the subtle differences. The fills were not always easy to see in certain weather conditions, so the site was not very photogenic.

The Enclosure: 1st century BC–1st century AD

A rectangular enclosure with two entrances was observed truncating the natural gravel (Fig. 8.3). Only a part of it was located in the excavation area and it must continue further down the field to the south, and possibly further east into the field on the other side of Little London Road. The enclosure was aligned NW–SE, and with only one certain corner within the excavation area. It was defined by what seem to be four stretches of ditch (200, in two sections, 201 and 203), with one definite entranceway centrally placed on the northern side. It is possible that another entranceway also existed on the same side, however modern truncation by a field drain disturbed the end of ditch section 101, and the archaeology seemed to taper out and disappear, so this is uncertain. Each ditch was excavated as a series of separately numbered slots. Ditch 200 incorporated two distinct sections of ditch either side of the entranceway. The two ditch sections terminated in rounded ends (18 and 29) which were fairly shallow at 0.25m–0.29m deep (Figs 8.4, 8.5). Ditch terminus 18 contained 33 sherds of pottery, and terminus 29 contained 6 sherds. The entranceway between the two termini was 1.60m wide. A small pit or posthole (30) was recorded on the northern edge of terminus 29, however no finds were retrieved from its fill, and it was impossible to determine its stratigraphic relationship with the ditch (Fig. 8.5), it may well be contemporary or possibly later. The ditches in this area were fairly clearly defined, with one light grey silty clay fill. They were all roughly u-shaped in profile and varied in depth between 0.16m and 0.29m. Fifty-two sherds of pottery were excavated from the five slots dug into the two segments of ditch 200. The sherds were a mixed group dating from the 1st centuries BC and AD.

Towards the north-eastern edge of the excavation trench, another ditch (204; slots 28 and 42) with a rounded butt-end was observed parallel with the main enclosure ditch (200). It did not truncate the main ditch (200), and only a 5m stretch of it was viewed before it was truncated by a later ditch (202). Three sherds of pottery of unknown date were recovered from ditch slot 42 only, so it is impossible to determine for certain its date. As it is aligned parallel to the main enclosure ditch, it may well be contemporary.

In contrast to the eastern side of the enclosure (200), the western ditches (201, 203 and 208) were extremely leached and pale in colour and varied in width and depth. It was impossible to see them in the early days of the excavation, and they only became apparent once the sun had bleached the gravels to a very bright whitish-grey colour.

Ditch 203 (slots 33 and 48) represents the western corner of the enclosure, which was linear in plan with an unusual bulbous terminus (33) that extended beyond the continuation of the other side of the enclosure. This may possibly be to facilitate the run-off of water, or may have been caused by the movement of water shifting the loose natural gravels. The ditch was very shallow at 0.13m, and was 0.43m wide in comparison to the eastern side of the enclosure, which was 1.22m wide in places. A loose mid grey-brown sandy-silty gravel filled the ditch. No pottery was recovered from 203, and this was a characteristic of this side of the enclosure, in contrast to the eastern side which was wider in parts, with different fills, and more pottery.

The west side of the enclosure was formed by ditch, which was only 0.15m deep at the northern end and 0.45m wide, but at the southern limit of excavation was 0.46m deep and 1.23m wide. Only one sherd of pottery was produced from six slots on this western side of the enclosure, from slot 44. The pot was dated to AD50 or later. Towards the southern limit of the excavation trench, the enclosure ditch 201 widened, and when slots (45 and 47) were dug across it, the possibility of a recut was revealed (208). This recut was far less substantial than the main ditch (201) (slots 44 and 46), and were more obvious in plan than in section. The gully appeared to truncate the main ditch but disappeared where the ground sloped to the north. Possibly only a short section of ditch was recut to define this area of the enclosure once it had initially silted up. It was very shallow at 0.07m deep, and was narrower than the main gully at 0.57m wide and it is possible that this is no more than a localised final infill of ditch 201 rather than an intentional recut.

Other Ditches 1st century BC to AD

A wide ditch (202), different in character from the other ditches on the site, obliquely truncated the enclosure ditch at the north-east corner of the excavation area. Ditch 202 was aligned north-south, and approximately 11m length of it was contained within the trench. This ditch was 1.75m wide, and 0.76m deep, much more substantial than the enclosure ditches. Two slots were excavated through it, (14 and 17) and these showed the profile was v-shaped, with a very steep break of slope at the top and steeply sloping sides (Fig. 8.4). Slot 17 had three fills, with the primary fill (86) a sticky sandy clay, containing 63 sherds of pottery, burnt flint and slag (Pl. 8.2). The secondary fill (65) was a firm mottled orange-brown clay, and contained 27 sherds of pottery. The top fill (64) contained 13 sherds of pottery. All of the pottery has a 1st century AD date. Slot 14 was 0.70m deep, and was filled with an orange-grey silty clay (61), and contained 14 sherds of pottery dating to the 1st century BC or AD. This ditch was wider and deeper than other ditches found on the site, and consequently it did not seem to be an extension of the enclosure. A slot to try and gain a relationship between this ditch and the enclosure was excavated at the northern edge of the excavation area. Unfortunately the point where the relationship between the ditches could be ascertained was almost at the excavation edge, so the relationship could not be viewed in plan, only in section. The slot (Fig. 8.5), proved that ditch 202 (slot 43) did seem to truncate the shallower ditch groups 200 and 204 (slots 42 and 41), although this is not particularly clear in the section. The shallower ditches had more gravelly fills which did not continue, so the deeper ditch 43 (202) seemed to cut them.

Across the central area of the enclosure was a narrow pale gully (206), aligned east-west. This gully had been located in Trench 2 of the evaluation. The gully tapered in width towards the west, and seemed to come to a shallow narrow rounded butt-end. Gully 206 was 35m long, and probably continued east towards Little London Road. It varied in depth between 0.31m and 0.12m. This gully may well be an internal feature of the enclosure, possibly to demarcate two small fields or pens within it. Twenty-seven sherds of pottery were retrieved from five slots, all dating from the 1st centuries BC to AD. One sherd of colour-coated ware which was probably imported was recovered from slot 15.

Two other ditches possibly not associated with the enclosure were found towards the south-eastern limit of the excavation trench. A ditch terminus, or possibly a large pit 21 (208) was excavated at the edge of the area, 2.54m wide by 1.70m long and 0.56m deep, and aligned roughly east-west. The terminus tapered to a rounded point, and contained three fills (70, 71, and 72), all of which contained pottery, totalling 31 sherds, dating to the 1st century AD. Slag and pieces of furnace lining were also recovered from fills 71 and 72. Presumably if this is a ditch, it will continue eastwards into the field beyond Little London Road.

Parallel with this feature but slightly further to the north, was another large linear ditch (205). It was very difficult to see as the fill was very similar to the natural clays and gravels, and was only defined by a subtle change in hue, dirtier than the natural geology. Four slots (24, 32, 100 and 102) were excavated across the ditch, and 42 sherds of pottery were recovered from them, as well as 14 pieces of slag and kiln lining. The ditch terminated within the excavation area in a rounded terminus 0.32m deep and 2.18m wide. It varied in depth between 0.44m and 0.65m. Slot 24 seems to have initially silted up gradually (fills 76 and 74), but a heavier fill (75) with a high percentage of gravel looks like it has been deliberately pushed into the ditch from the north, and may be the slighted remnants of a bank. Although the other slots do not show the same initial natural silting, they all contained heavy sandy clay fills with a high proportion of gravel which is likely to have been backfilled. The pottery dates again span the 1st centuries BC and AD, however the 1st century BC material was recovered from the backfilled gravel and may represent sherds contemporary with the construction of the ditch (incorporated into the bank at the time of digging, perhaps). Overall, it seems more likely that this ditch went out of use during the 1st century AD.

During the evaluation, two possible features were recorded from trench four, which lies within the confines of the enclosure area. At the time it was thought that feature 7 was a NW-SE aligned ditch, however, once the excavation area was stripped, it was apparent that it was not a linear feature, but a natural undulation in the natural gravel that had filled up with 0.20m depth of a grey clayey gravel. This deposit contained three sherds of Roman greyware, which is probably 3rd to 4th century AD in date. Another feature (8) interpreted as a droveway during the evaluation produced seven sherds of the same Roman greyware, but again when seen completely in plan during the excavation, it did not turn out to be a real feature. It seems likely that the pottery was discarded in the vicinity, or spread on the field as manure from a midden and worked its way into the soil through natural taphonomic processes. No other features on the site produced pottery of this date.

Other features (largely unphased)

Located centrally within the confines of the enclosure ditch, but truncating the edge of linear ditch 206, was an unusual short linear feature with rounded ends (207). It was aligned NE-SW, and tapered slightly at its south-

western end. When it was excavated, it became apparent that it was more complex than it looked from the surface. The feature was dug as a trench (27), however at its north-eastern end was a large round posthole (25), dug into the bottom of the trench (Fig. 8.4). The posthole was 0.41m in diameter, and was 0.74m deep, which suggests that it once contained a substantial timber. At the south-western end of the trench, was a circular feature with a rounded base (26) which may possibly be a postpad. A single fill (80) filled both the trench and the posthole, which was darker in colour in comparison to the fills of the other features on the site. One small iron nail was retrieved from the fill, but no pottery or other finds were retrieved. The fill was sampled, but no environmental material, and no more finds were recovered. The feature was directly to the south of the enclosure entrance and the posthole was dug where a timber would have stood right in line with the entranceway. The lack of dating evidence and any later stratigraphy to suggest a date, means this feature is impossible to pin down to a period. It is only possible to say that the location of the trench right in front of the enclosure entrance may suggest a deliberate action, and possibly a contemporaneous date.

On the far north-western edge of the excavation, beyond the enclosure ditch, another possible ditch terminus (49) was excavated. The feature contained two fills (158 and 159). One sherd of pottery dating from the 1st century BC or AD was recovered from fill 158. This feature may continue towards the edge of the field further to the west if it is a ditch. The terminus was sub-rounded in plan, with a concave base and a steep south-eastern edge, with a longer break of slope on the north-western edge.

Two shallow pits (37 and 38) were located inside the western edge of the enclosure, both circular in plan. Pit 37 truncated the eastern edge of enclosure ditch group 201. No finds were recovered from either pit, however two burnt flint pebbles were recorded in pit 38. It is possible that these features may be natural, probably tree boles, but the uniformity of the cuts suggest a deliberate action. Another probable tree bole (39) was excavated to the north of the northern enclosure ditch, and also contained burnt flint. It is possible that these tenuous features may be prehistoric in origin, but without any secure dating evidence it is impossible to judge.

One other feature (31) was investigated within the confines of the enclosure, and was initially thought to be another ditch terminus. It was very amorphous in plan however, and was not observed as a linear feature like the other ditches on the site. It contained two sandy-silt fills (85, 84), with no finds, and seems to be geological rather than archaeological in origin.

Watching Brief Features (Fig 8.2)

Machining of the sewer pipe trench from the edge of the excavation area, down the field to the south and through the edge of the woods at the end of the field, was supervised by an archaeologist. The trench was approximately 1.40m wide, and was excavated using a mini-digger with a ditching bucket. Archaeological features were observed in two areas of the trench. An east-west aligned ditch (104) was located 16.60m along the trench from the edge of the excavation area. The ditch had steeply sloping sides which tapered to a rounded point. Two fills were contained within the cut (168 and 167). The primary fill 168 produced 51 sherds of pottery with a date in the mid 1st century AD. Twenty-one sherds of pottery dating to the 1st century AD were retrieved from the top fill of the ditch, which was pale in colour. The ditch was 0.42m deep and 0.62m wide and extended across the width of the trench. It is possible that this ditch might be the south side of the enclosure, making it around 54m from north to south. However this cannot be proved unequivocally without further work.

This ditch truncated an unusual spread of sandy silt (170), which may represent occupation debris. It was a clearly defined layer, containing 84 sherds of pottery dating to the post-conquest period, including bowls and flagons. The ditch was located on the north side of the layer, and the layer was 0.15m thick at the edge of the ditch, tapering to 0.05m further south. The spread extended 1.7m south from the southern edge of ditch 104, and spanned the width of the sewer pipe trench. It was not present north of the ditch. Below this layer, and not visible from the surface, was a probable posthole (105). This was circular in plan, with concave sides, which were steeper on the southern edge than the northern. The feature was located on the southern edge of ditch 104. It was seen in isolation within the sewer pipe trench, so it is not easy to interpret. The stratigraphy demonstrates that the posthole was dug prior to the ditch, as the layer 170 sealed the posthole, which in turn was truncated by the ditch.

Approximately 10m further to the south of ditch 104, at 26.40m from the edge of the excavation trench, another ditch was dug into the natural gravelly clay. Ditch 103 was also aligned east-west across the width of the sewer pipe trench. In this area there was no buried soil layer, and the ditch was observed as a very pale yellow-brown feature, quite leached as the archaeology in the excavation area had been. Ditch 103 was steep sided and u-shaped like ditch 104, but was slightly deeper at 0.55m, and it was 0.95m wide. Primary fill 166 contained no finds, and was a clean naturally accumulated silty sand. The upper fill 165 contained three sherds of pottery dating from the 1st century BC or AD and no other finds. The pottery is probably early in the date range, and it is suggested that this may be one of the earliest features on the site.

Further to the south along the trench, no other archaeological features were observed, apart from a modern field drain, so it would seem that the archaeology was restricted to the plateau.

Ditches in Evaluation Trenches to the South of the Excavation Area

Evaluation trenches 5, 6 and 7 were all located to the south of the excavation area, but all on the area of higher ground on the eastern side of the field. None of these evaluation trenches were incorporated in the excavation area where the footprints of the new buildings were to be placed (Fig. 8.2).

Towards the northern end of Trench 5 was an east-west aligned ditch (4) that crossed the width of the trench. The ditch was 1.10m wide, 0.45m deep, and was u-shaped in profile. The ditch had one fill (53), which contained one sherd of Roman pottery (from an Alice Holt jar).

Trench 6 contained three ditches (3, 5, 6) that were all orientated on a NE-SW alignment. The ditches were all notable in that they were shallow and wide, whereas most of the ditches on the site were deeper, and narrower. Ditch 3 was 1.20m wide and 0.10m deep, and contained nineteen sherds of pottery. Significantly, the fill contained seven sherds of Campanian black sand wine amphora (Dressel 1 or 2-4) that were not found elsewhere on the site. Other pottery sherds from this ditch may date from the first half of the 1st century AD.

Ditch 5 lay adjacent to ditch 3, and was also shallow and wide at 1.30m, and 0.25m deep. No finds were recovered from the fill (54). Another ditch (6) lay further along the trench to the north, which was 1.30m wide and 0.30m deep. Four sherds 1st century BC-AD pottery were recovered from the fill (55). It is likely this was a continuation of ditch 103.

Trench 7 was the furthest south of the trenches, and contained one east-west aligned ditch. This was again

very wide, at 1.40m, and 0.40m deep. The ditch fill (50) contained six sherds of pottery dating to the early 1st century AD. If ditch 1 was the southern side of a second enclosure whose northern side was ditch 6 and 103, this would have been a larger field (some 64m north-south) than the one excavated.

The Finds

The pottery by Jane Timby

An assemblage of some 491 sherds of pottery, weighing 3.42kg, was recovered, largely dating to the later Iron Age and early Roman period. In addition a small amount of ceramic building material and fired clay were recovered. The pottery came from 30 individual cuts, some of which belong to the same ditches, and two layers. The quantity of material from each feature varied from quite sizeable groups from, for example, ditch 202 with 113 sherds, layer 170 with 84 sherds and ditch 104 with 72 sherds, to very small groups of less than five sherds.

The condition of the material was very poor. The sherds were very abraded with loss of surface and overall there were relatively few featured sherds. The overall average sherd weight was just 6.9g. In many cases just unidentifiable crumbs were present.

The assemblage was sorted into fabrics based on the range and coarseness of the macroscopic inclusions. Some of the fabrics can be linked with material recovered from the early pre-Roman horizons at Silchester and these are prefixed with SIL. Full details of these fabrics can be found in Timby (2000). There were in addition a small number of fabrics not recorded to date from Silchester and these are described more fully below.

The pottery was quantified by sherd count and weight for each context (Table 8.1). The group is too small for estimated rim equivalents to be measured.

Fabric and form

A quantified summary of the fabrics recorded can be found in Table 8.1.

Iron Age

Bone-tempered (BO1): A single handmade, brown bodysherd with a black core. The very fine paste contains a sparse frequency of fine white specks, which at x20 magnification prove to be fine fragments of calcined bone. The paste also contains a scatter of fine, dark brown iron grains. The sherd came from ditch 205 (24).

Calcareous ware (CA1): A dark brown, handmade ware with a black core. Slightly rough, sandy texture. At x20 the paste contains a sparse scatter of fine, rounded to sub-angular fine quartz sand, sparse grog, red-brown iron and voids, some with calcareous linings. The fabric has a very vesicular texture and is quite crumbly. Represented by 16 bodysherds from ditch 200 (18), probably from one closed vessel.

Coarse flint-tempered ware (FL1). A handmade, coarse, flint-tempered ware similar to Silchester ware but slightly sandier. Possibly an earlier variant. No featured sherds.

Sparse flint-tempered (FL2). A fine sandy, micaceous paste containing sparse flint, 2–3mm in size. No featured sherds.

Silchester ware (SILF1). Coarse, handmade, calcined flint-tempered ware (Timby 2000, 239–43). This ware is by far the commonest in the assemblage accounting for 40% by sherd count, 59% by weight. Forms are limited to the standard internally thickened beaded rim and everted rim jars.

Silchester grog-tempered ware (SILG1). A mainly handmade, dark brown to black, soapy grog-tempered ware (Timby 2000, 225). Featured sherds are limited to two beaded rim jars.

Silchester grog-tempered ware (SILG4). A reddish-brown ware with a black core. Occurs in both thinner wheelmade forms and handmade forms (Timby 2000, 235). Vessels include a dish and a beaker fragment.

Sandy ware with grog (GRSA). A red-brown sandy ware containing a common frequency of fine quartz visible at x20 magnification, sparse iron and grog. No featured sherds.

Silchester grog and flint-tempered ware (SILGF1). As fabric SILG1 with added flint (Timby 2000, 245). A single featured sherd from a necked bowl came from ditch 202 (17).

Miscellaneous grog-tempered wares (GR). Other grog-tempered handmade fabrics not included above. No featured sherds.

Silchester sandy ware with sparse calcined flint (SILF4). (Timby 2000, 243). Probably locally made at Silchester. A single beaded rim jar.

Handmade sandy ware (SA1). A red-brown ware with a black interior/ core and a fine sandy texture. The paste contains a common frequency of fine, well-sorted quartz sand. Fairly thick-walled. No featured sherds.

Iron-rich sandy ware (SAFE). A fairly micaceous fine sandy matrix with a sparse scatter of dark red-brown, rounded iron up to 2mm in size and at x20 magnification a scatter of ill-sorted rounded quartz and mica. Occasional large iron inclusions up to 6 mm. No featured sherds.

Roman

Imports

Campanian black sand amphora (CAM AM1) (Tomber and Dore 1998, 88). Seven bodysherds from a single context and probably from a single vessel. Probably from a Dressel type 2–4 although a Dr. 1 sp. cannot be discounted.

Samian (?South Gaulish) SAM. A single very worn base from a samian bowl was recovered from ditch 200 (18).

?Imported colour-coated ware (CC). A buff sandy bodysherd with traces of a dark red colour-coat was recovered from gully 206 (15). Probably from an imported ware.

Local

Alice Holt grey ware (ALH RE) (Tomber and Dore 1998, 138). Represented by 35 sherds, featured sherds are limited to beaded rim jars and everted rim jars. One jar sherd from hollow 7 has a burnished lattice decoration.

Miscellaneous grey or black sandy wares (GREY). Featured sherds include a wheelmade necked bowl and a black sandy beaker with a red core.

Iron-rich oxidized ware (OXIDFE). A fine, sandy, orange ware with a sparse scatter of dark orange/ red-brown subangular iron up to 2mm in size and some fine mica. Restricted to two vessels from the buried soil (170), both everted rim necked bowls, one with a slightly internal groove or lid seating.

Miscellaneous oxidized ware (OXID). Various buff, pinkish or orange medium sandy wares of unknown provenance. Forms include a flagon from the buried soil (170) and a bowl from ditch 7.

Discussion

The pottery assemblage appears to broadly derive from a single phase of occupation probably spanning the mid-late 1st century BC up to the later 1st century AD and possibly beyond. A very small assemblage from the subsoil, (7 and 8) may date to the later Roman period. The assemblage can be split into wares of Iron Age character, largely handmade, and Roman wares proper. The group was overwhelmingly dominated by a Silchester ware, a coarse flint-tempered handmade ware effectively accounting for 40% by sherd count. Silchester ware was in use from the later Iron Age through into the early Roman period and was used almost exclusively for jars, and rarely for lids, although not the latter in this particular assemblage.

The other main fabric group is a grog-tempered one, which collectively accounts for a further 15% of the assemblage. Although potentially earlier in date than Silchester ware it broadly spans the same period.

Accompanying these two main groups of flint and/or grog-tempered wares is a small number of bone-tempered, calcareous or sandy wares. Although only a very minor component of this assemblage, these wares are of significance in that they did not feature in the pre-Roman assemblage analysed from Silchester (Timby 2000), and may therefore indicate a phase of occupation slightly pre-dating that investigated below the basilica (Fulford and Timby 2000). Unfortunately their potential chronological significance cannot be assessed since all of these sherds occur alongside other more familiar types, with the possible exception of ditch 103 from the watching brief, with just three small sherds all of Iron Age character.

Three ditches, two forming the main rectangular enclosure (200, 201), and 202, produced 33% of the pottery by count, a total 164 sherds (1437g, or 42% by weight). Although most of these are pre-Roman native types a few Roman wares, including the single sherd of samian and some Alice Holt ware, point to abandonment some time in the later 1st century AD. Two pieces of ceramic building material were also recovered from ditch 200 (101). Ditch 205 to the south of the enclosure produced a further 49 sherds (111g). This material was much more fragmented with an average sherd weight of just 2.3g compared to 8.8g from the three major ditches. The pottery from 205 does not include any Roman wares proper and could well be of pre-conquest date.

Gully 206, parallel to and north of 205 produced 24 sherds, (186g), all native pre-Roman wares apart from the imported colour-coated sherd. The material is better preserved with an average sherd weight of 7.8g suggesting different formation processes at work compared to ditch 205. This feature could also potentially be pre-conquest in date.

The remaining assemblage was distributed across a number of features, mainly ditches. Subsoil (7 and 8) in evaluation Trench 4, produced Alice Holt wares of Roman date and oxidized sandy ware, possibly of 3rd or 4th century date. Small groups of potentially pre-conquest material came from ditch terminus 21, and pit or ditch terminus 49. Ditch 103 in the sewer pipe trench, produced three small sherds (FL1, GR and SA1) and one piece of fired clay. This could potentially be the earliest feature investigated but the sherds are small and could be redeposited. The fills of ditch 104 produced 72 sherds (642g), 78% of which were SILF1, 19.5% unidentifiable crumbs and two Roman sherds suggesting that this feature was also filled in the early post-conquest years. The layer (170) cut by ditch 104 is also post-conquest in date.

Pre-conquest material was also recovered from evaluation Trenches 3 (ditch 2), 6 (ditches 3 and 6) and 7 (gully 1). A sherd of Roman Alice Holt ware came from ditch 4 in Trench 5. Of particular note from ditch 3 in Trench 6 are seven sherds of Campanian black sand wine amphora (Dressel 1 sp. or 2-4), accompanied by 11 sherds of grog-tempered ware (SILG4) and one of SILSF, which might support a date in the first half of the 1st century AD.

As a group of pottery this assemblage can only be rated as poor in terms of preservation and closely diagnostic wares. However, its value lies in its relationship with the town of Silchester. There has as yet been little evidence of Iron Age pottery predating the flint and grog-tempered traditions of the later 1st century BC from the excavations at Silchester. Whilst there are no specific features which can certainly be dated to this period, this assemblage as a whole might suggest earlier activity in the locality. To date there has been a pattern in the immediate hinterland around Silchester where there is little evidence of the range and quality of imports documented at Silchester getting to the smaller contemporary rural sites in its hinterland. Whilst this site is not prolific in exotic material, the colour-coated sherd, samian and Campanian amphora do break this pattern, which may be the product of the sample investigated to date.

Ceramic building material

At least sixteen fragments of possible ceramic building material are present, nine from the subsoil (164), three from ditch 205 (24 and 32), and two each from gully slots 101 and 102. The material from the subsoil is the most clearcut with at least one recognizable *tegula*, a *pila* and a piece of combed box flue. The other pieces are very worn and abraded. Five small fragments of amorphous fired clay were also recovered.

Metal-working debris by Chris Salter

The amount of material recovered was relatively small, just over 400g, the majority of which was hearth lining and related material (Table 8.2). The range of material classed as hearth lining for this report ranged from one piece of burnt daub, possibly from part of a hearth superstructure, through clay hearth lining with thin layers of vitrification on their surfaces, to heavily vitrified material and flows of low density slag formed by the reaction of the partially melted hearth lining with the fuel ash and other hearth contents. The latter is also sometimes known as Fuel Ash Slag in the metallurgical literature although it is not strictly a fuel ash slag as the bulk of the material forming the slag came from the erosion of hearth lining and other material in the hearth rather than the fuel.

Most of the true slag was in the form of small broken pieces of iron slag and other non-diagnostic iron slag flows. These do not identify the nature of the iron working process that was being carried out. However, one abraded fragment was large enough to be identified as a piece of smithing hearth bottom, the lump of slag that builds up slowly in the bottom of the forging hearth as a result of the reaction between the iron-oxide-rich hammer scale shed from the work piece as it is heated, the fuel ash and any hearth lining or rock fragments that fall into the hearth. Small smithing hearth bottoms, such as this, are indicative of secondary smithing in which a stock bar is forged into a finished item, or old artefacts are reforged or repaired.

Also identified were two fragments of iron oxide hard-pan, a material that is easily mistaken for slag in

small samples. One of these fragments had been heated. This is unlikely to have been deliberate given that there was no other evidence of pigment production or other use of iron ore on the site.

The whole collection of material, the hearth lining and the iron slag is entirely consistent with being the result of secondary smithing. However, the small quantity of debris recovered and its widely distributed nature suggest that this is background scatter, indicating that there had been some smithing activity in the general area, rather than that the activity was associated specifically with the excavated features. In addition, the hearth lining came mainly from ditches 205 and 208, whereas the slag came from ditches 202 and 207 (see Table 8.3). This indicates that it is most likely that two different types of debris came from two different episodes of high temperature pyrotechnical activity. The degree of vitrification on the hearth lining indicates that the hearth had been taken to temperatures in excess of those normally found in an open fire. However, this does not necessarily mean that the vitrification was the result of metal-working activity, as other processes such as cremation, pottery-making or lime burning can achieve the required temperatures. On the other hand, the split in the distribution could simply represent a difference in the manner in which the two types of debris was disposed of. Both quantity and distribution are typical of what might be expected of any non-industrial late Iron Age or early Roman settlement.

Struck flint by Steve Ford

A single prehistoric struck flint (a broken flake) was recovered from ditch 206, slot 19 (fill 67). The piece is not closely datable.

DISCUSSION

The evaluation and excavation work undertaken at this site revealed an enclosure and a number of ditches, all spanning the important transitional period between the Late Iron Age and the early years after the Roman invasion, in the 1st centuries BC and AD. Very little excavation has been carried out beyond the town walls of *Calleva*, in relation to settlement and landuse, and survey work has been largely confined to within 500m of the defences (Corney 1984). As a consequence, little stratified material of this period has been found, and our knowledge of the immediate pre-Roman and early Roman landscape is somewhat limited in terms of dateable known sites. The small size of the excavation area limits the degree of interpretation; however, combined with aerial photographs and previous archaeological surveys, a greater understanding of the site within the landscape can be arrived at. The evaluation work and watching brief allowed for a *insight* into how far archaeological features were spread across the field, and demonstrated that features were largely confined to the higher ground and flat plateau, and did not seem to continue further down the hill slope.

The pottery recovered from the majority of the features suggests that this site was probably in use from the middle of the 1st century BC through to the middle or late 1st century AD. It seems that following the abandonment of the site at this period, no further use of the enclosure was made, and the site reverted back to a larger probably open field. Very few possible tree boles were found on the site, so it would seem that the site remained open from the Roman period through to the present day. Only a few sherds of later Roman (3rd to 4th century) pottery were recovered, and those were from natural features, so they do not necessarily suggest any use

of the site during this later period.

Soils samples were taken from all the ditches for sieving. No charred cereal remains or anything else of interest was noted in them. Also, no animal bone was recovered from any of the excavated features, which may be the result of the soil's being too acidic for bone to survive.

The enclosure appears to have been dug sometime in the late Iron Age, as the earliest pottery from the enclosure is a handmade calcareous ware, which was not part of the pre-Roman assemblage from the excavations in Silchester. This does suggest that the features excavated on this site, and probably in the immediate locality may be slightly earlier than the earliest features investigated during the basilica excavation. The enclosure appears to have silted up naturally, which may have taken quite a long time, possibly 50 to 100 years judging by the presence of 1st century BC and 1st century AD pottery. One sherd of samian was recovered from ditch terminus 18, and the presence of Alice Holt ware may indicate continued use into the later 1st century AD. Ditch 202 which truncates the enclosure at the north-eastern edge of the excavation area, and is also dated to the 1st century AD, suggests a period of landscape reorganization, when the enclosure had gone out of use and silted up before the construction of this new ditch. It also implies that the construction of the enclosure (rather than its disuse, for which the pottery provides the dating) should be pushed back towards the start of its likely date range in order to allow time for both the enclosure and ditch 202 to have filled within the 1st century

All the pottery was very abraded so would seem to have been discarded and have been degrading for some time before becoming incorporated within the ditch fills. The number of linear features in this small area would seem to suggest that this area was intensively used during the late Iron Age and probably earlier, but the landscape significantly changed around the middle of the 1st century AD, and the ditches and enclosure went out of use. The ceramic chronology is not sufficiently precise to ascribe this change definitively to the impact of the conquest; an impetus from existing indigenous processes is equally possible.

The other ditches recorded within the excavation and evaluation trenches are also part of a larger agricultural landscape, with further enclosures and stock control features, and possibly arable fields extending to the south and probably to the east on the other side of Little London Road. Aerial photographs of the site and its environs also shed more light on the archaeology observed in the trenches. An aerial photograph taken during 1971 (Run 38, 29415) held by the Archaeology and Historic Buildings Record (AHBR) in Winchester, seems to show either the continuation across the road of the enclosure observed during the excavation, or another enclosure similar in plan (Pl. 8.3). The photograph also shows what is probably a further enclosure, roughly rectangular with rounded corners, slightly further to the south in the same modern field. A linear ditch seems to run diagonally between the two, and may well be on a similar alignment to ditch 202, which truncates the excavated enclosure. The diagonal cropmark ditch also appears to truncate the enclosure in this eastern field, and so may be part of a slightly later ditch system.

These features were seen as parchmarks on the aerial photograph, and so are quite faint and difficult to interpret. It is fairly certain that an enclosure or enclosures exist in the field adjacent to London Road, which form part of a larger system, and which must be related to stock management.

Similar enclosures have been noted during the Silchester extramural survey (Corney 1984). In particular crop-marks to the north-west of the Roman town indicate some degree of landscape organization. A very similar

enclosure exists to the west of Pond Farm, which is also rectangular in plan, and has a diagonal ditch extending from its south-eastern corner. It has a probable entrance in the centre of its southern side. No date can be attributed to this feature as it lies under permanent pasture, but it may be of a similar period to the enclosure on this site. There do not appear to be any internal structural features within the confines of the enclosure, so presumably any settlement associated with it lies elsewhere within the locality.

Similarly, the lack of internal features within the enclosure excavated at Little London Road indicates stock management rather than settlement, although any habitation presumably lay not too far away. The presence of metallurgical debris in the form of hearth lining and secondary smithing slag within the ditch fills, suggests settlement in the near vicinity, and this type of activity was certainly not taking place on the site itself but this debris is unlikely to have travelled far. The concentration of this material towards the east of the excavated area, coupled with the noticeably greater density of pottery finds towards the east compared to the west, suggests settlement may have lain to the east here.

The presence (if only in small quantities) of imported pottery is certainly of note as there has been little evidence of this type of material from contemporary rural sites within the Silchester hinterland. More work on sites of this type in the vicinity of the town can only shed more light on this, and lead to a greater understanding of the early economy of the *oppidum*. Fulford (1992, 36) has noted that material assemblages from gravel sites abandoned in the early Roman period sometimes show evidence for their involvement in a 'complex and sophisticated exchange or marketing system' particularly apparent from the ceramic assemblages. The presence of samian and amphora from some of the ditches on this site is further evidence of this phenomenon.

In summary, the site has produced evidence of a highly organized agricultural landscape, with stock enclosures and fields laid out during the pre-Roman Iron Age and early Roman period. These enclosures and field systems are all part of a much wider agricultural landscape surrounding the Iron Age *oppidum* at Silchester, and suggest a highly organized agricultural economy centring on the *oppidum* itself. The relatively short lifespan of the enclosure and other ditches suggests a change of focus at some point during the mid to late 1st century AD, which may parallel the growth of towns and the development of Roman administration and taxation (Fulford 1992). At this time, the intensively used landscape may have reverted back to more open fields.

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Table 8.1: Pottery quantification by fabric group by context

<i>Group</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>LA</i>	<i>Silch ware</i>	<i>Grog</i>	<i>Roman</i>	<i>crumbs</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>Date</i>
200	18	66	-	-	15	17	-	32	225	AD 50 +
200	23	77	-	1	-	1	4	6	16	C1 AD
200	29	82	1	-	-	-	5	6	10	Iron Age
200	35	91	-	-	5	-	-	5	96	C1 AD
200	101	161	-	-	-	1	-	1	2	AD 50 +
201	44	153	-	-	-	1	-	1	2	AD 50 +
202	14	61	-	14	-	-	-	14	149	C1 BC-AD
202	17	64	-	7	6	-	-	13	220	C1 AD
202	17	65	-	25	-	2	-	27	377	AD 50 +
202	17	86	-	3	56	-	-	59	340	C1 AD
204	42	98	-	-	-	-	-	3	70	undated
205	24	74	-	-	1	-	6	7	15	C1 AD
205	24	75	3	-	3	-	-	6	16	C1 BC
205	32	87	-	-	19	-	-	19	44	C1 AD
205	100	160	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	C1 AD
205	102	162	-	-	16	-	-	16	35	C1 AD
206	9	58	-	-	-	-	-	3	74	C1 BC-AD
206	15	62	-	10	-	1	-	11	54	C1 AD
206	16	63	-	2	-	-	-	2	29	C1 BC-AD
206	19	67	-	3	3	-	-	6	54	C1 BC-AD
206	19	68	-	5	-	-	-	5	49	C1 BC-AD
	1	50	-	-	-	-	-	6	52	C1 AD
	2	51	-	-	-	-	-	7	15	Early C1 AD
	3	52	-	1	11	7	-	19	205	Early C1 AD
	4	53	-	-	-	1	-	1	6	C2 AD
	6	55	-	-	-	-	-	4	37	C1 BC-AD
	7	56	-	-	-	2	-	2	19	Late C3-C4 AD
	8	57	-	-	-	7	-	7	72	Late C3-C4 AD
	12	surface	-	-	-	-	-	6	52	Early C1 AD
	21	70	1	1	-	-	-	2	9	C1 BC-AD
	21	71	1	-	1	-	1	3	4	C1 AD
	21	72	-	5	5	6	10	26	49	C1 AD
	22	73	-	-	4	-	-	4	6	C1 AD
	49	158	-	1	-	-	-	1	2	C1 BC-AD
	103	165	1	1	1	-	-	3	10	C1 BC-AD
	104	167	-	20	-	1	-	21	160	C1 AD
	104	168	-	36	-	1	14	51	482	AD 50 +
		163	-	-	-	-	-	1	7	undated
		170	3	50	-	31	-	84	355	AD 50 +
TOTAL			11	185	146	79	41	491	3420	

Table 8.2 Summary of metalwork debris types

<i>Material Type</i>	<i>Weight (g)</i>	<i>Number</i>
Burnt Daub	59.4	1
Hearth Lining	227.1	24
Low density slag	23.8	3
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>310.3</i>	<i>28</i>
Iron Slag	60.6	13
Smithing Hearth Bottom	41.3	1
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>101.9</i>	<i>14</i>
Natural	4.9	2
Total	417.1	44

Table 8.3 Classes of debris by type and context group (weight in g)

	<i>Ditch</i>	200	202	203	205	207	208
Burnt Daub					59.4		
Hearth Lining		11.1			110.2		105.8
Low density slag			22.5		0.4	0.9	
Iron Slag		2.6	2.6	0.8		54.6	
Smithing Hearth Bottom			41.3				
Natural		0.9			4		

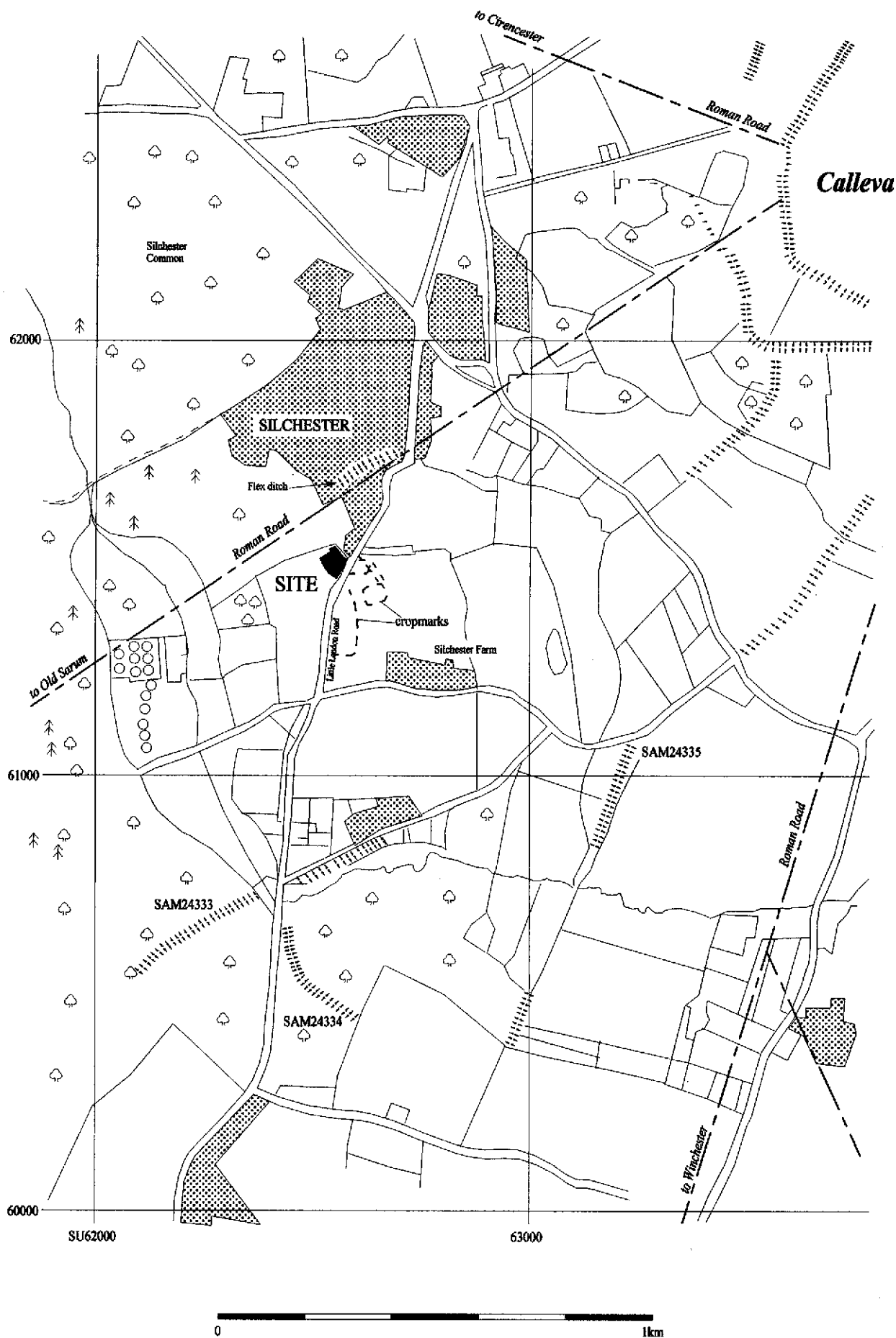


Figure 8.1. Location of site relative to Calleva Roman town and outworks.

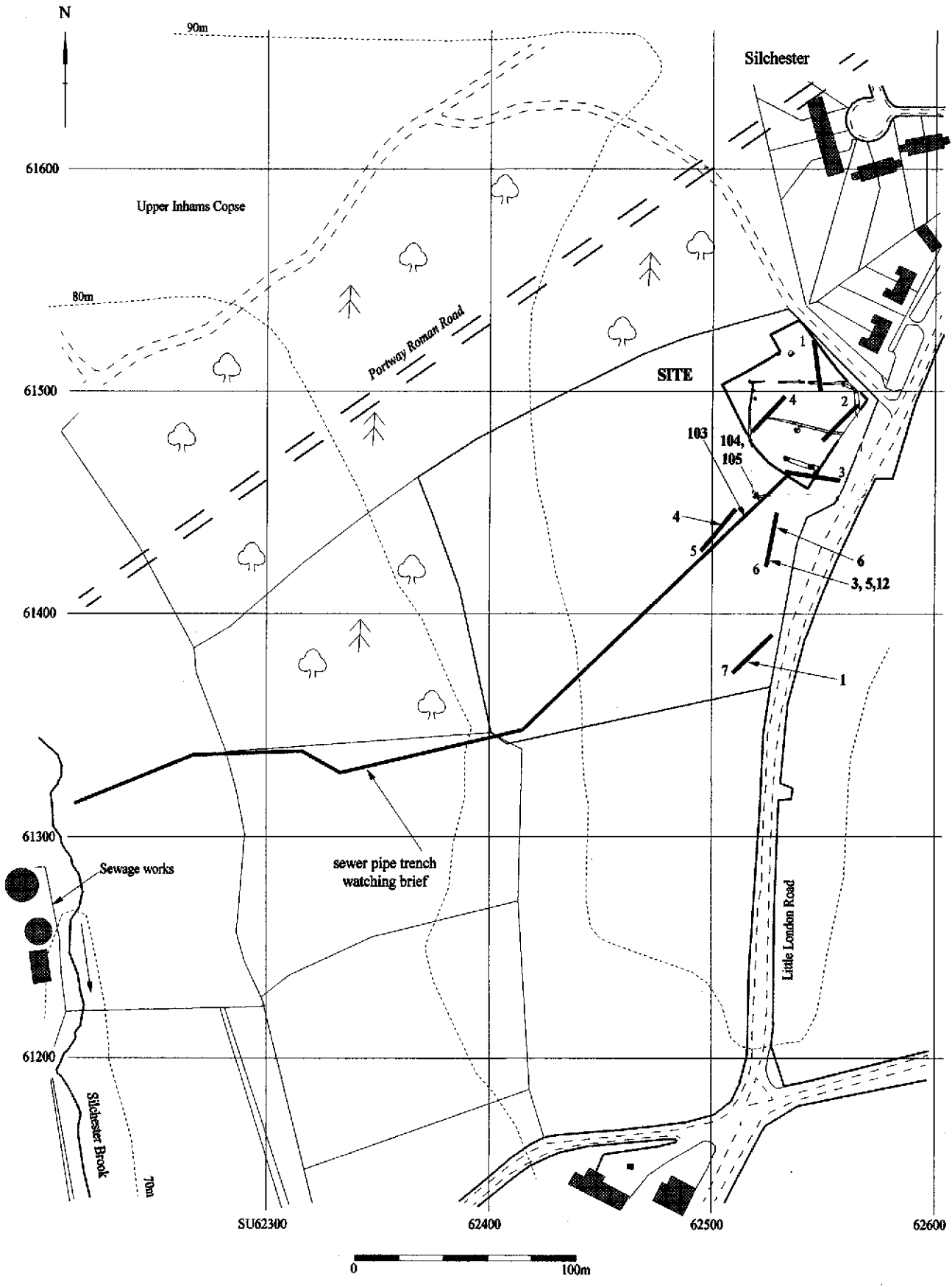


Figure 8.2: Detailed location of site showing evaluation trenches and sewer pipe trench watching brief

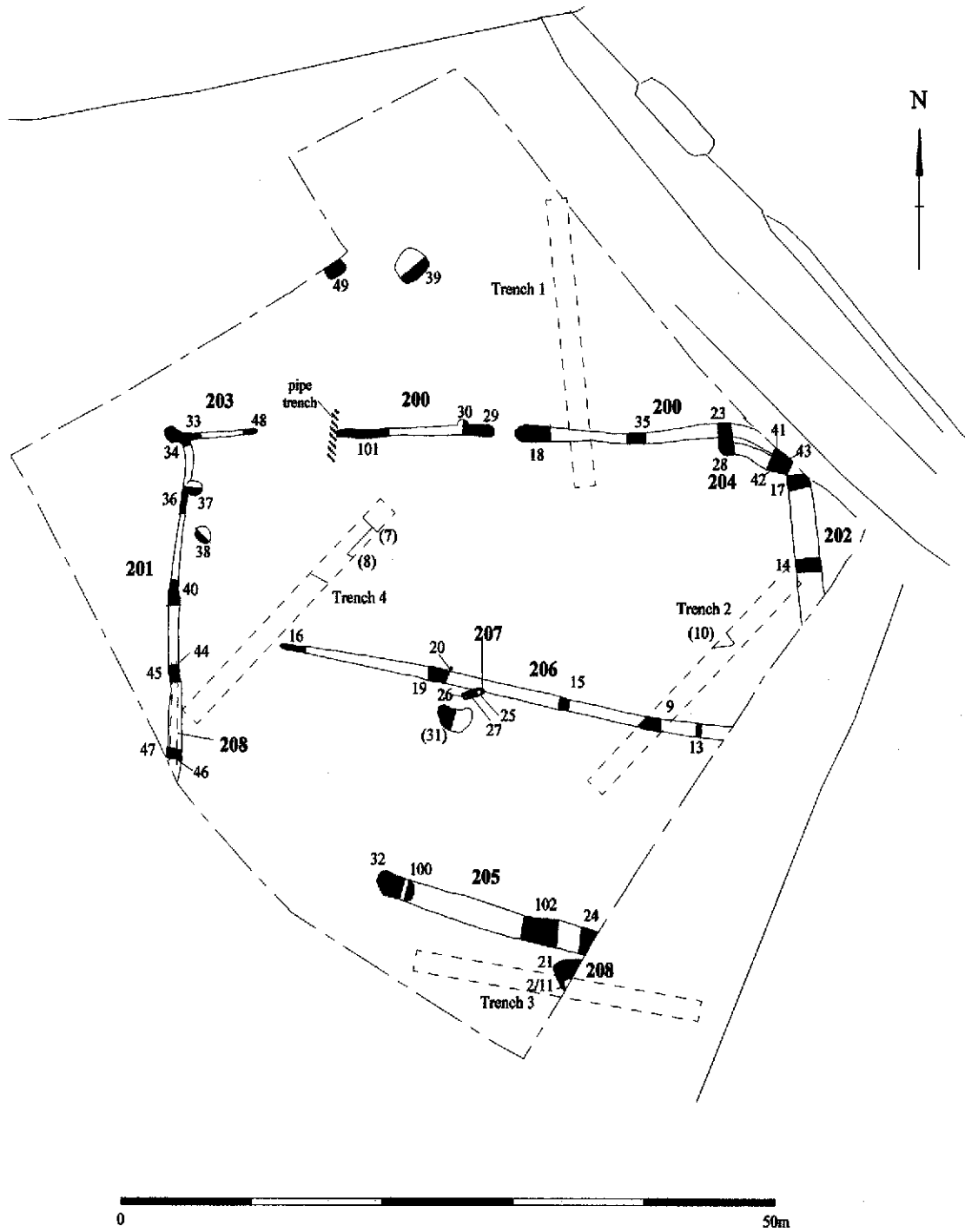


Figure 8.3: Plan of excavated areas, showing all features.

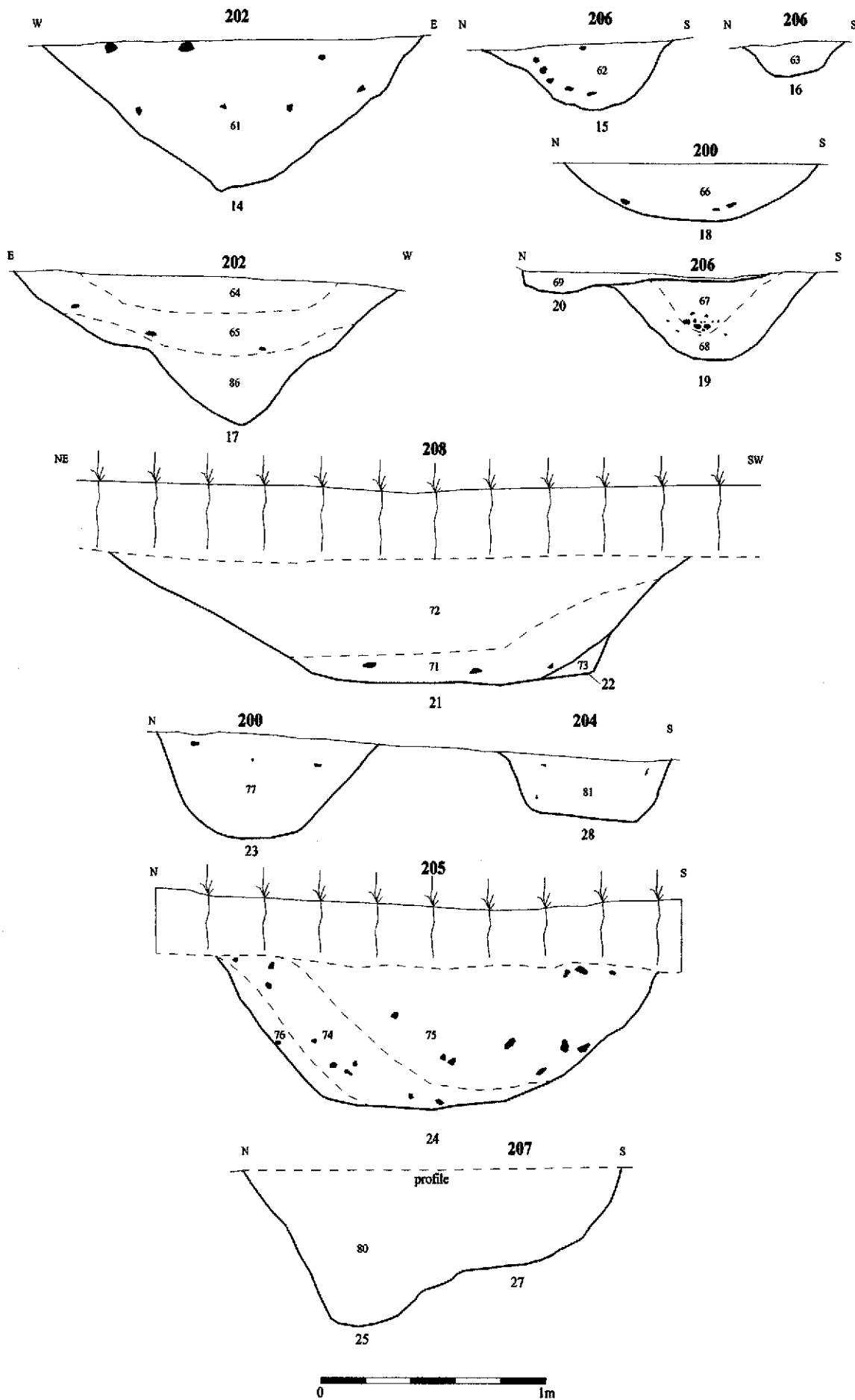


Figure 8-4. Sections

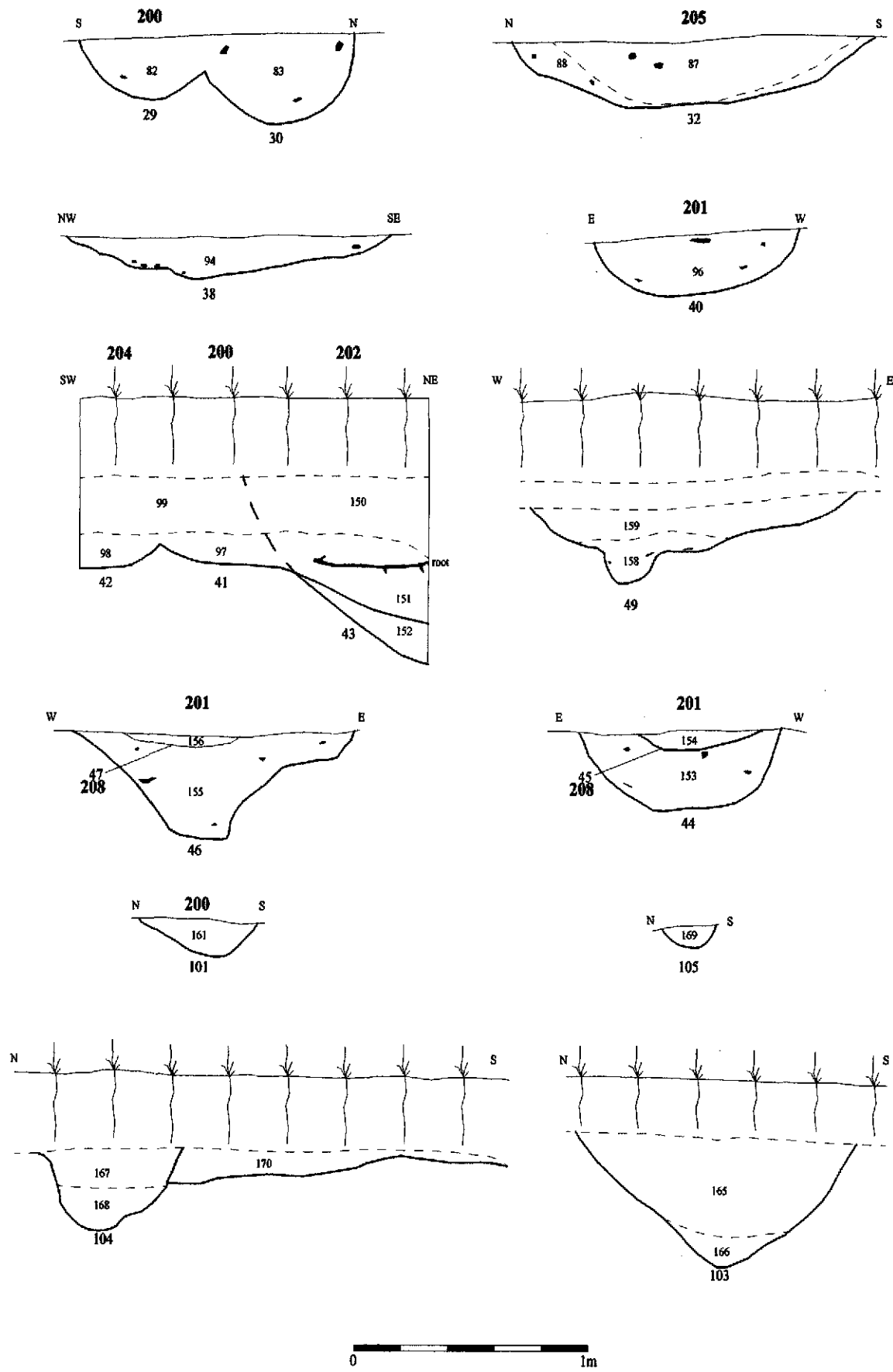


Figure 8-5. Sections



Plate 8.1; Little London Road: the view and the site.

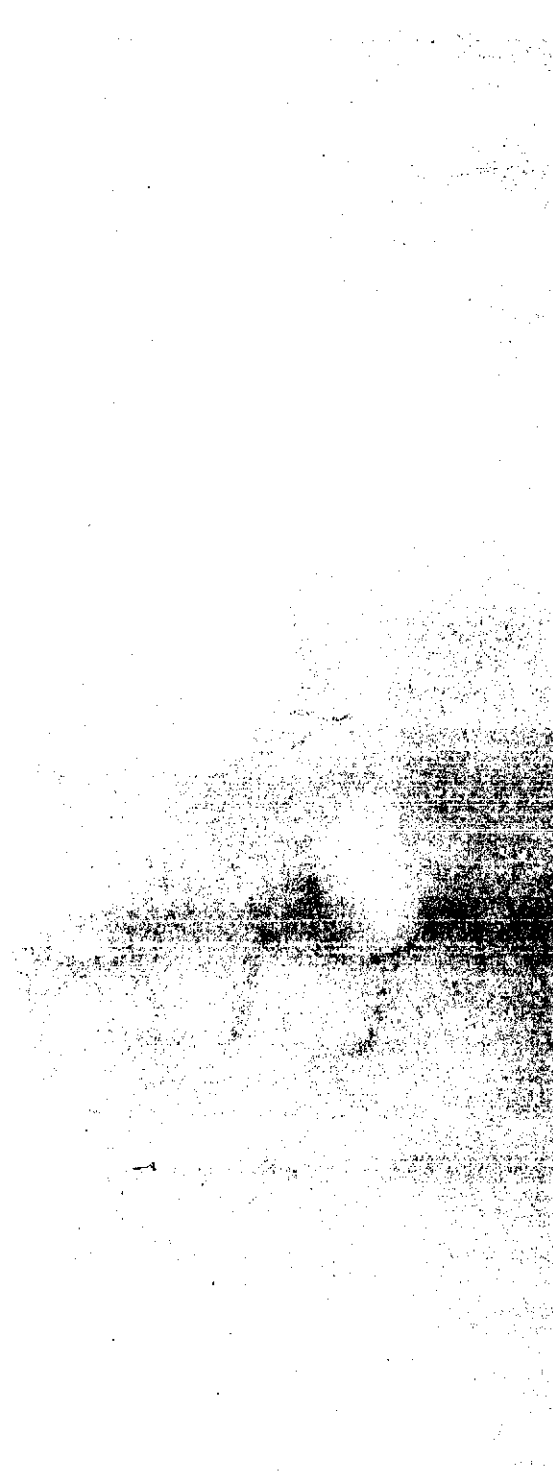
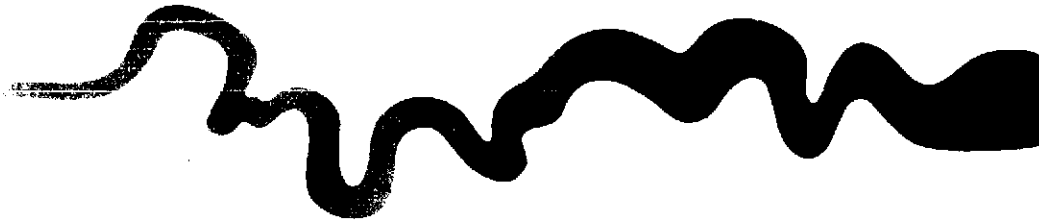
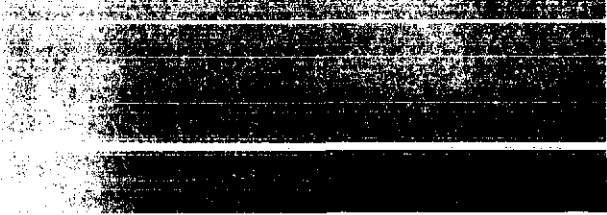


Plate 8.2. Little London Road ditch 202 slot 17; scale 2m

TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
	AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	750 BC
Bronze Age: Late	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle	1700 BC
Bronze Age Early	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10,000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	50,000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70,000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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