

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**St Mary's Lee, Church Lane,
Silchester, Hampshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Susan Porter

Site Code: SML12/164

(SU 6440 6238)

**St Mary's Lee, Church Lane,
Silchester, Hampshire**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Mr Richard Stamvik

by Susan Porter

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

Site Code SML 12/164

November 2012

Summary

Site name: St Mary's Lee, Church Lane, Silchester, Hampshire

Grid reference: SU 6440 6238

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 12th November 2012

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Susan Porter

Site code: SML 12/164

Summary of results: Made ground deposits at least 1.70m deep were recorded. The upper layers were post-medieval and modern, perhaps upcast from the nearby pond but the lower deposits could not be dated. It is unclear if they form part of the Roman defences.

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

*This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website:
www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 21.11.12
	Steve Preston✓ 19.11.12

St Mary's Lee, Church Lane, Silchester, Hampshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Susan Porter

Report 12/164

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at St Mary's Lee, Church Lane Silchester, Hampshire SU 6440 62380 (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Richard Stamvik, St Mary's Lee, Church Lane, Silchester, Hampshire RG7 2HH.

Scheduled monument consent has been gained (S0047125) to construct a new swimming pool. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by groundworks, a field evaluation was proposed as detailed in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979).

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Massey, Inspector of Ancient Monuments for English Heritage. The fieldwork was undertaken by Susan Porter and Natasha Bennett on 12th November 2012 and the site code is SML 12/164. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Hampshire Museums Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the western side of Church Lane, Silchester, adjacent to the parish church of St Mary's. It also lies adjacent to the stone wall of Silchester Roman town and within the area of the scheduled monument (Fig. 1). The site is recorded as lying on the edge of the Plateau Gravel and Lower Bagshot Beds (BGS 1971), and at a height of c.90.7m above Ordnance Datum. The land currently forms a rear garden to the house with a small pond at the north-east end. The land is built up from the road on the north-western side and slopes steeply down beyond the hedge to a large pond (Fig. 2; Pl. 3).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the area of the scheduled monument of *Calleva Atrebatum*, the Late Iron Age *oppidum*, and Roman town of Silchester (SAM no 243356) (Fulford and Corney 1984; Fulford and Timby 2000). It lies outside of the Roman town's stone built wall, just south of the

east gate, but sits on top of an earthwork and may be within an area of any extra mural Roman settlement or in an area of the town that was larger than that eventually enclosed by the stone wall. It is not clear if the earthwork in this location is ancient, as it may be associated with the pond or with the road. The site also lies close to the medieval parish church and probably within the original medieval village of Silchester which was subsequently deserted (Ford and Hopkins 2011). Excavations not far to the north at Manor Farm had revealed a Flavian ditch but also much later disturbance (Fulford 1984, 37–41).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development. This work was to be carried out in a manner that would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which warrant preservation in-situ, or might be better excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of this project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels had survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of and period were present;
- to determine if any deposits associated with the deserted medieval settlement were present;
- to determine if any deposits associated with the Iron Age or Roman town were present; and
- to provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.

It was proposed to dig one trench 5m long and 2m wide to be targeted at the footprint of the new pool. Topsoil and any overburden were to be removed by a JCB-type or small 360°-machine equipped with a ditching bucket to expose archaeologically sensitive levels. Where archaeological features or deposits were present the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools. A metal detector was to be used in order to enhance the recovery of metal finds, and spoil heaps were to be monitored and searched to enhance finds recovery.

Results

The trench was dug as intended within the footprint of the proposed pool (Fig. 3). The trench was aligned approximately north–south and measured 6.50m in length and 2.90m wide and 1.70m in depth. The spoil heaps were monitored and searched with a metal detector to enhance finds recovery.

The stratigraphy of the trench (eastern section) consisted of 0.20m of topsoil (50) overlying 0.40m of a dark grey brown clayey sand (51) with frequent 5-20mm gravel which contained modern brick and tile. This in turn overlay undated made ground (52); a light brown grey clayey sand with frequent 5-10mm gravel and flint inclusions which was 0.50m deep. This sealed a made ground deposit 0.20m thick, of a mid brown yellow sandy clay (53) with flint and 5-15mm gravel which again contained no finds. This then sealed 0.35m+ of light brown grey silty clay deposit (54) which contained frequent 5-10mm gravel, again this being undated made ground as no finds were retrieved. The natural geology was not observed at this depth (Fig. 4).

Finds

Pottery

A sherd of 19th-20th century transfer painted pottery was recovered from topsoil (50). A single body sherd of post-medieval glazed red earthenware was recovered from layer (51).

Ceramic Building Materials by Danielle Milbank

A modest quantity of ceramic building material was recovered during the evaluation, with a total of 1.347kg of ceramic building material (9 fragments) recovered from two contexts.

A made ground deposit (51) contained two pieces of glazed bathroom tile of unambiguously modern date, and piece of brick also of recent manufacture.

Topsoil deposit (50) contained one fragment which is a red colour with a grey (reduced) core and a slightly striated upper surface, and on the basis of thickness (31mm) and fabric possibly represents a piece of Roman tile (*tegula*).

The topsoil deposit also contained four roof tile fragments and though only one piece with a peg hole was recovered, all but one likely to be from peg tiles. Typically, the tile thickness is 14mm. The tile fabric was examined at x10 magnification and was uniformly sandy, with frequent small well-sorted quartz sand inclusions. The fragments are generally fairly hard and well-fired, and all but one have a rough base indicating a sandy mould was used. The colour varies from a lighter orange-red to darker red. One piece is of certain modern date. The remainder are of a type of tile produced from the 13th to 19th century, and on the basis of the form and fabric the fragments are from the later half of this range, though they are not closely datable.

A brick fragment also recovered from the topsoil layer (50) was examined at x10 magnification. It is of a hard, evenly-fired fabric with inclusions of rounded quartz and flint, and is overall a light red colour. It is a small fragment and could not be closely dated, though it is likely to be post-medieval.

The assemblage of brick and tile recovered in the evaluation is very modest, and the majority of the brick and tile fragments could only be very broadly dated (to the medieval or post-medieval periods) as techniques and materials vary considerably according to local industries and resources. The fragment identified as Roman is quite abraded and is clearly redeposited.

Conclusion

The evaluation trench was dug as intended and showed that there were deep made ground deposits continuing below 1.70m below the present ground surface. These likely reflect the trench location; excavated on raised ground with a steep drop to both the west and east. Unfortunately dating of the deposition of the lower man-made dump deposits is not possible. The uppermost of the made ground deposits contained modern finds of pottery and ceramic building material whilst made ground deposit (51) directly below the topsoil contained ceramic building materials and a sherd of late post-medieval glazed red earthenware. There are over 1.10m of made ground deposits below this level that remain undated and it is possible that some may represent materials of a Roman rampart or some other construct surrounding Silchester. However, it is considered that the pond lies in the town ditch and that the principle rampart lies beneath the stone wall to the west (Fulford and Corney 1984, fig 35). Our site lies east of the pond and some or all of the deposits could relate to the construction of the road to the east or landscaping of the overburden generated from the digging of the pond to the west.

The depth attained by the trial trench was below the intended formation level of the pool and as such if any deposits of archaeological interest remain below this depth they will not be damaged or destroyed by the works.

References

- BGS, 1971, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 268, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Ford, S and Hopkins, H, 2011, 'Silchester Field Survey; University of Reading Student Projects, Hampshire, 1981 – 89' in Preston, S (ed), *Archaeological investigations in the Silchester hinterland, Exploring landscape use around the Roman town*, TVAS monograph 9, Reading, 21 - 30
- Fulford, M, 1984, 'Part 1: The excavations', in M Fulford and M Corney, *Silchester: excavations on the defences 1974 – 80, with a field survey of the extra-mural territory*, Britannia Monogr 5, London, 25–108
- Fulford, M and Corney, M, 1984, *Silchester: excavations on the defences 1974 – 80, with a field survey of the extra-mural territory*, Britannia Monogr 5, London
- Fulford, M and Timby, J, 2000, *Late Iron Age and Roman Silchester: excavations on the site of the Forum-Basilica 1977, 180 – 86*, Britannia Monogr 15, London

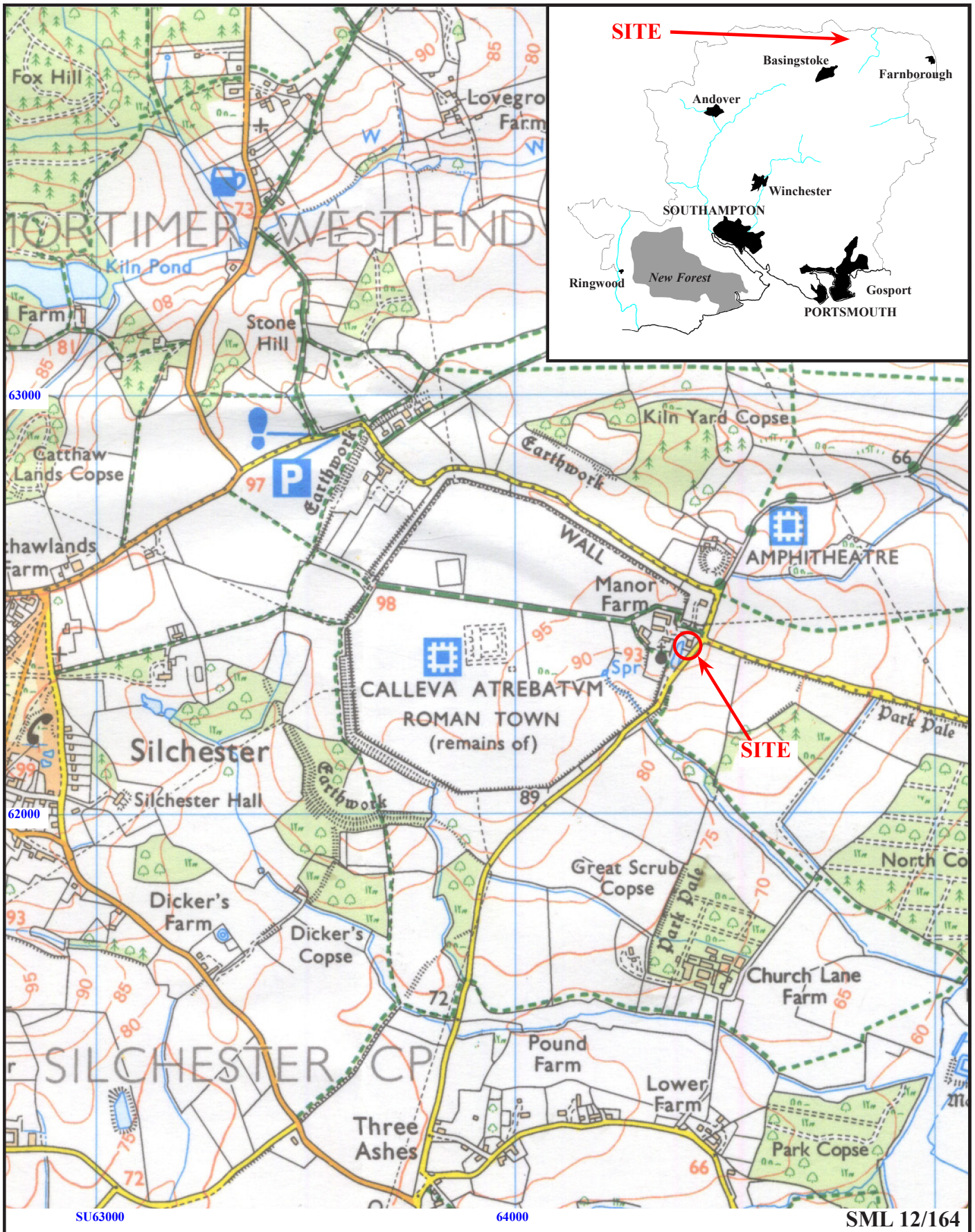
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	6.50	2.90	1.70	0.00-0.20m topsoil (50); 0.20-0.60m dark grey brown clayey sand (51) with modern brick and tile; 0.60-1.10 light brown grey clayey sand (52) with frequent 5-10mm gravel and flint inclusions; 1.10-1.30m mid brown yellow sandy clay (53) with flint and 5-15mm gravel; 1.30m+ light brown grey silty clay deposit (54) which contained frequent 5-10mm gravel [Pls 1 and 2]

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1		50	Topsoil	Modern	Pottery/brick/tile
1		51	Made ground	Late post-medieval/modern	Pottery/tile
1		52	Made ground	Undated	
1		53	Made ground	Undated	
1		54	Made ground	Undated	



**St. Mary's Lee, Church Lane, Silchester
Hampshire, 2012**

Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Calleva Arebatum, modern Silchester and within Hampshire.

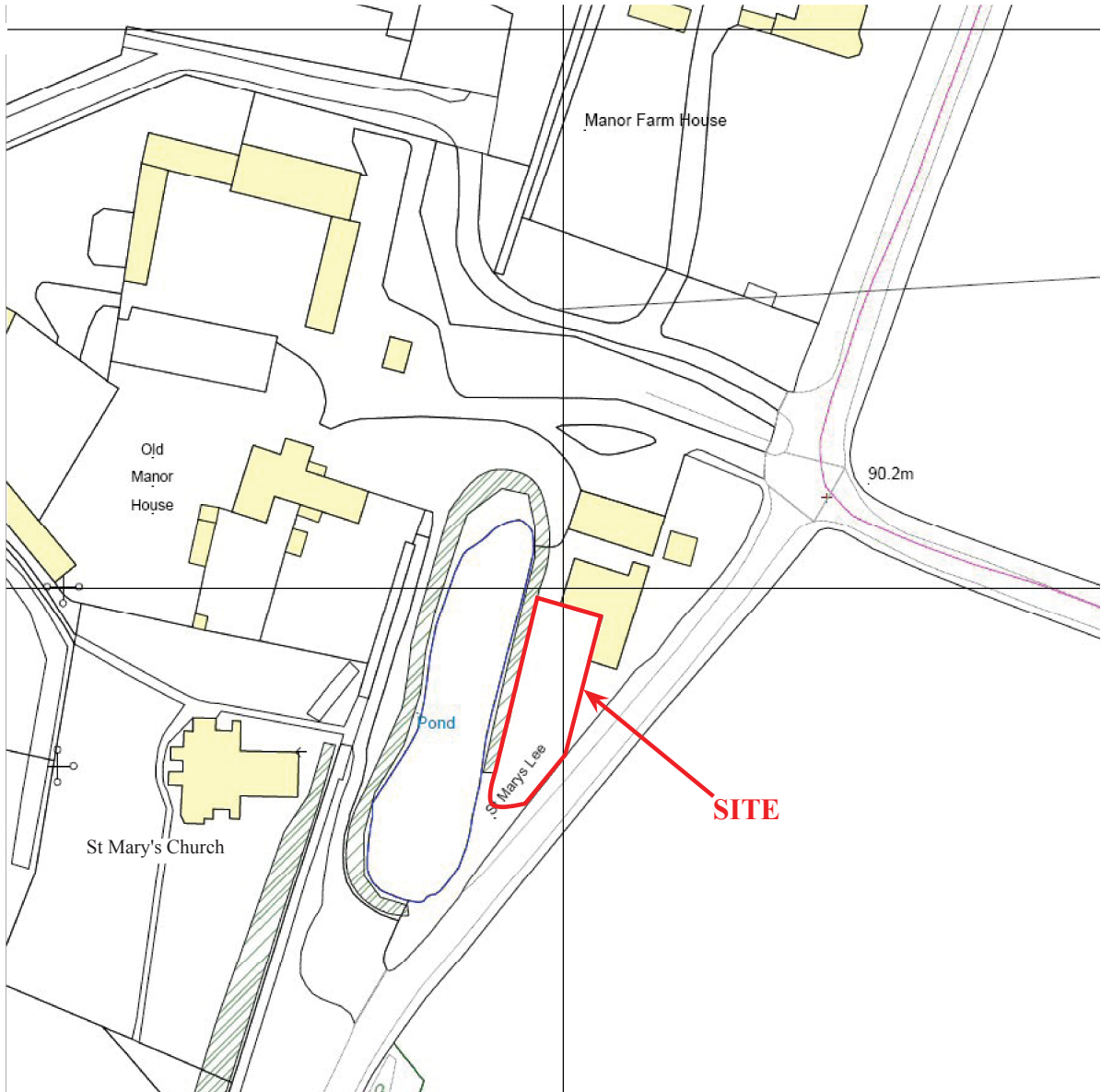
Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Explorer 159 at 1:12500
Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

62500

62400

SU64400



SML 12/164

N



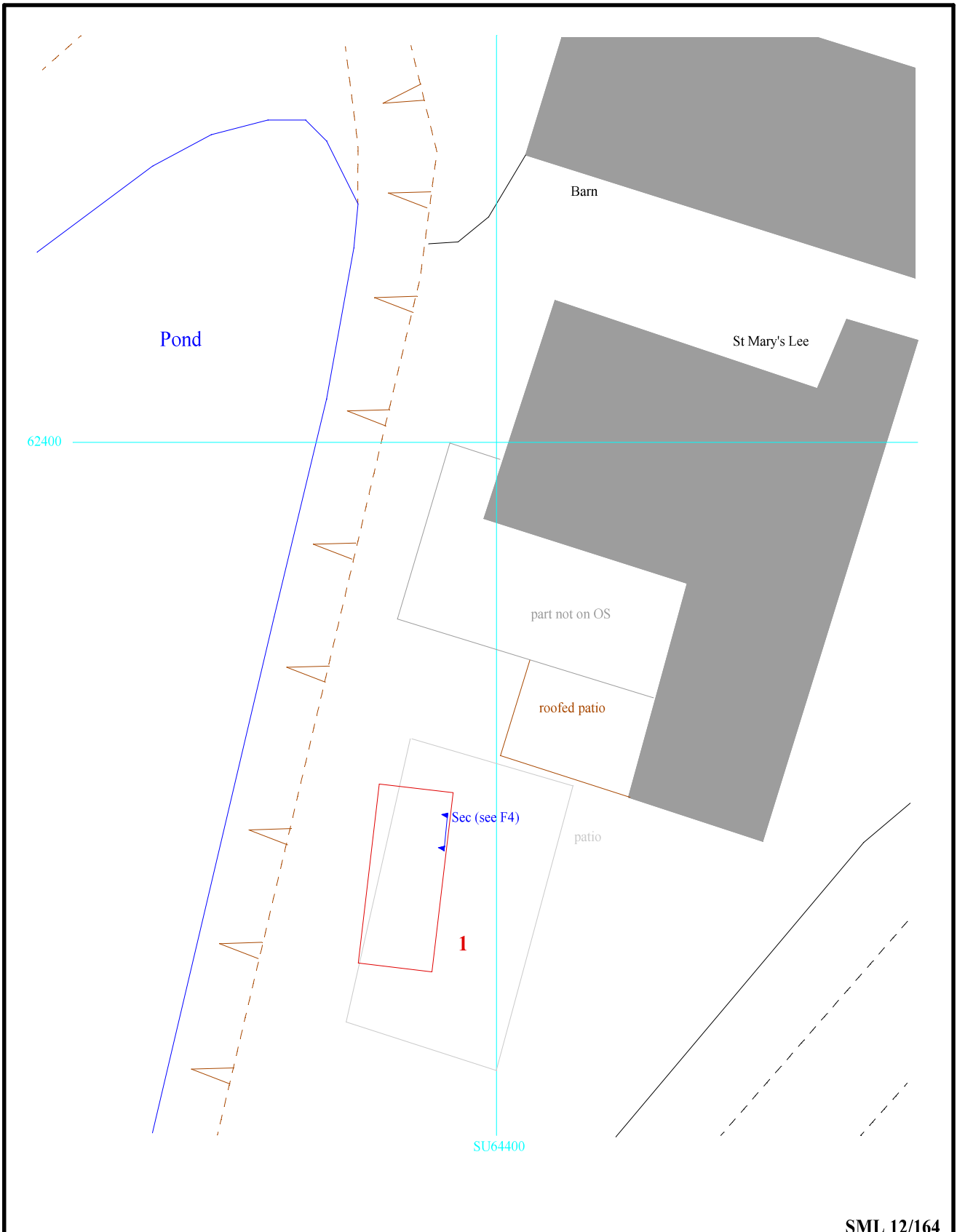
**St Mary's Lee, Church Lane, Silchester
Hampshire, 2012**

Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital mapping under licence.
Crown copyright reserved. Scale: 1:1250

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



SML 12/164



**St Mary's Lee, Church Road, Silchester,
Hampshire, 2012
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 3. Location of Trench 1.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

N

S

90.7maOD

Topsoil (50)

Dark grey brown clayey sand with gravel inclusions (51: Modern made ground)

Light brown grey clayey sand silt with gravel inclusions (52: Made ground)

Brown grey clayey sand with gravel inclusions (53: Made ground)

Light brown grey silty clay with gravel inclusions (54: Made ground)

base of trench

Natural geology not reached

SML 12/164

**St Mary's Lee, Church Road, Silchester,
Hampshire, 2012
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 4. Representative section.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north, Scales: 2m and 1m.

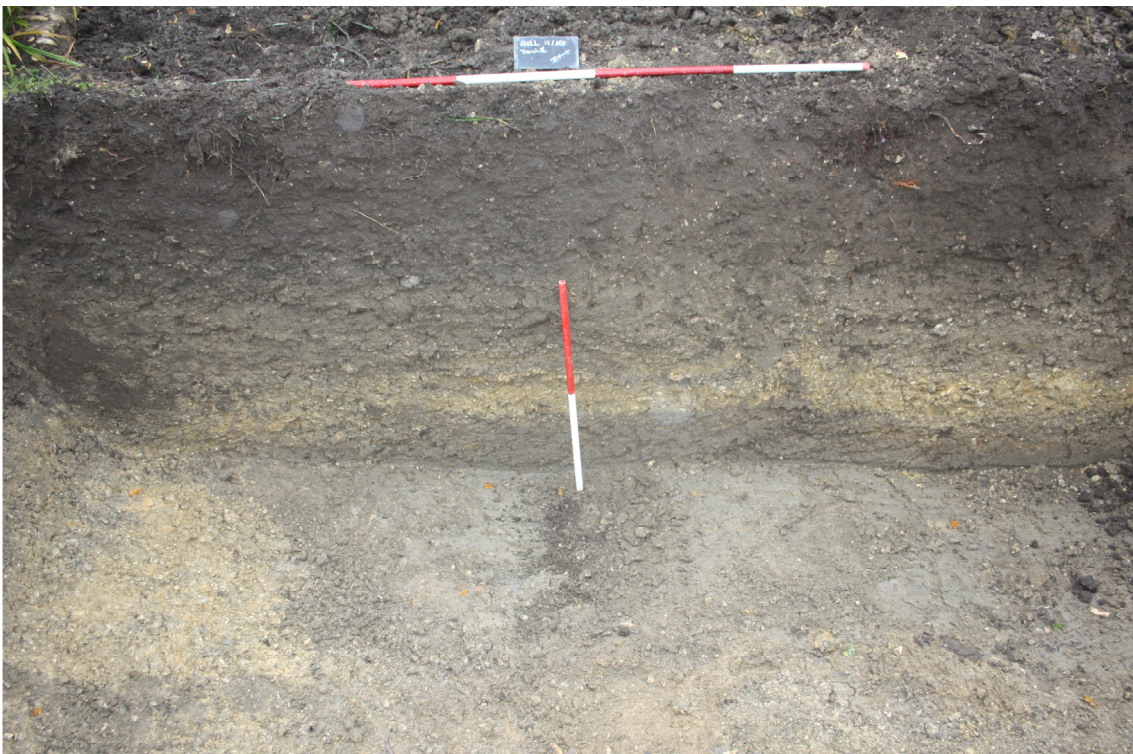


Plate 2. Representative section, looking east, Scales: 2m and 1m.

SML 12/164

**St. Mary's Lee, Church Road, Silchester,
Hampshire, 2012**

Archaeological Evaluation

Plates 1 and 2.

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 3. Site shot, looking at top of rampart, looking south.

SML 12/164

**St. Mary's Lee, Church Road, Silchester,
Hampshire, 2012
Archaeological Evaluation**

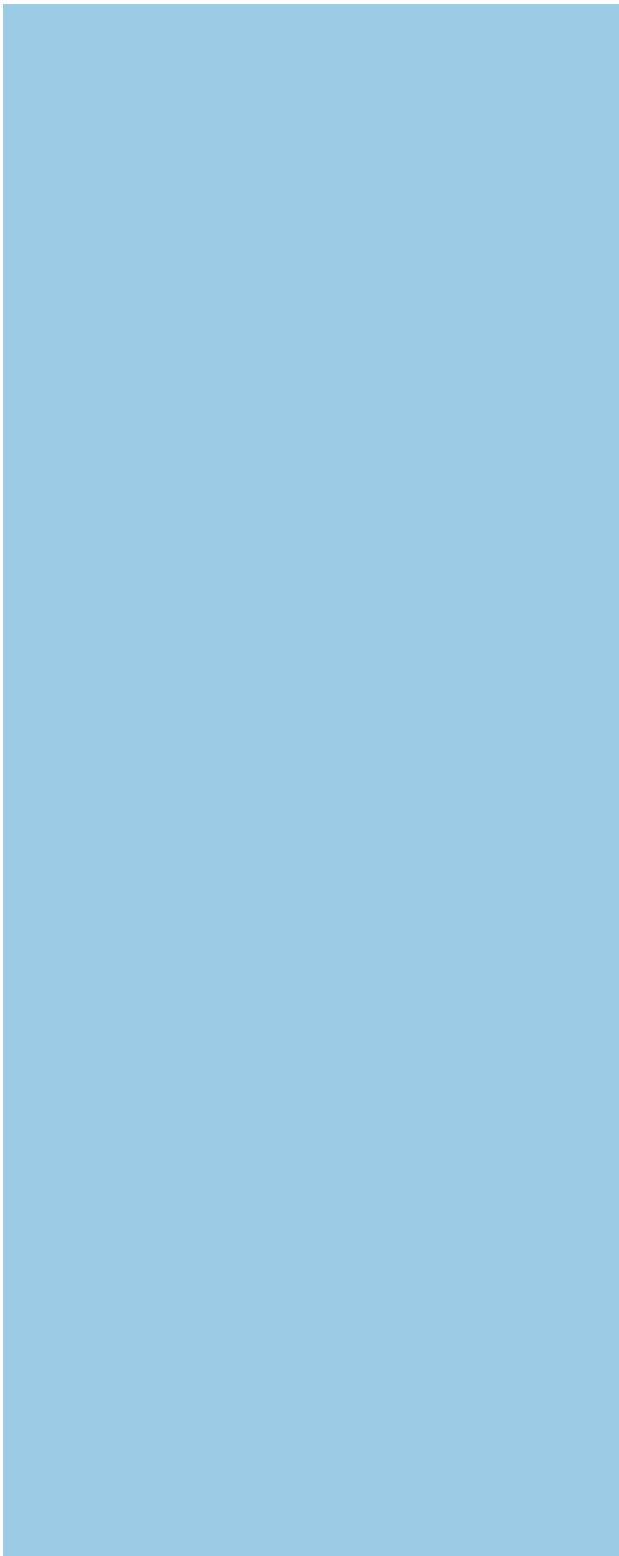
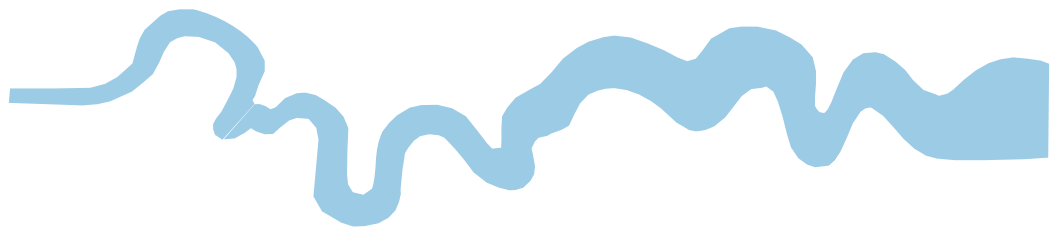
Plate 3.

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 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	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,
47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading,
Berkshire, RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552
Fax: 0118 9260553
Email: tvas@tvas.co.uk
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**