

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Rye Cottage, Wall Lane,
Silchester, Hampshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Muddin

Site Code: RFB12/139

(SU 6364 6280)

Rye Cottage, Wall Lane, Silchester, Hampshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr Patrick Garrett

by Andrew Muddin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code RFB 12/139

December 2013

Summary

Site name: Rye Cottage, Wall Lane, Silchester, Hampshire

Grid reference: SU 6364 6280

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 17th October - 17th December 2013

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Dan Bray, Andrew Muddin

Site code: RFB 12/139

Summary of results: No deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest were recorded during the digging of foundations for a new house. However, a collection of Roman pottery with a wide date range was recorded from a deposit partly exposed beneath a garage extension.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 23.12.13

Rye Cottage, Wall Lane, Silchester, Hampshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Muddin

Report 12/139

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Rye Cottage, Wall Lane, Silchester, Hampshire, RG7 2HP (SU 6364 6280) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Patrick Garrett, of Treetop House, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield, Berkshire, RG7 1PY. The site lies within the Scheduled Ancient Monument of *Calleva Atrebatum*, a Late Iron Age oppidum and Roman walled town (SAM no 243356).

Planning consent has been gained from Basingstoke and Deane's Borough Council and Scheduled Ancient Monument consent (S00047245) has been gained from English Heritage on behalf of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, for the demolition of the previous house known as Rye Cottage, to be replaced by a new two-storey house on roughly the same footprint and utilising the existing foundations where necessary. These consents include an extension to the south of an existing garage (Fig. 2).

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Dr Richard Massey of English Heritage, The fieldwork was undertaken by Daniel Bray and Andrew Muddin between the 17th October and 17th December 2013. The site code is RFB 12/139.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Hampshire Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site lies towards the north west margins of the Roman town to the south west of Wall Lane (Fig. 2). It lies between the outer defensive earthwork and the later stone town wall. The earthwork is approximately 30m immediately to the west of the site (Fig. 3). The site lies at c.96m above Ordnance Datum (OD) and the underlying geology is Plateau Gravel (BGS 1946). This was exposed in base of the main house footing.

Archaeological background

In summary, the site lies within the town as it was in the earlier part of it's development when it was defined by the earthen rampart just to the west. The stone and flint wall to the east is later than the earthwork and reflects a contraction of the defensible area. There is, however, much evidence both for occupation up to and beyond the

outer earthwork before the stone wall was built, as well as extra mural occupation after it was built. Observations to the north of Wall Lane have revealed evidence for this occupation at Chitty Farm (Ford, S 1997; Ford, a 1997; Hammond 2006; Muddin 2008). Prior to the extension of Rye Cottage in 1988 evaluation followed by excavation took place (Fulford et al 1997; Fig.3). This revealed occupation deposits comprising boundary features pits, post, holes and a possible post-built building. Three phases of activity were identified ranging from the 1st/2nd centuries AD through to 3rd.4th centuries. Trench 2 of the excavation was located fully within the westernmost component of the previous extension.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This would involve examination of all areas of intrusive excavation, including new foundation trenches, service runs and a topsoil strip to the south of the existing garage. Prior to demolition, test pits were dug along the sides of the house to establish the depth of the foundation and the level of natural disturbance

Results

Test pits

Two test pits were excavated along, the northern side and south-western corner of the existing house prior to demolition (Fig.3). The north-eastern test pit, Test Pit 1 (Fig. 4; Pl.1), was 0.96m deep, and noted that 0.27m of brown silt with gravel covered 0.2m of grey silt. This seem to be relatively undisturbed horizon at this location. It did not, however, recovered any finds. Test pit 2, to the south, was 1.1m deep and identified 0.6m of modern infill under 0.35m of topsoil. Modern brick fragments were within this fill. No natural gravel was uncovered in the base of this test pit.

Foundation trenches

The design of the building was intended to reuse the foundations from the previous structure. Most of the foundation of the initial house, that existed prior to the 1988 excavation, still existed in the ground and were reuse. Most of the new trenching extended westwards, but this zone lay within the limit of the 1988 excavation. As with Test Pit 2, an area of infill was recorded within the southern footing trench's north facing section (Fig.4), but was modern in date. In general, site overburden overlay gravel in areas, that had previously undisturbed, to a depth of 0.4m.

Garage strip

The garage extension required a machine strip of the topsoil from an area of c. 6m x 6m area to a depth of 0.4m. This area, to the south of the existing garage (Fig. 3 and Pl. 2), did not expose natural gravel at this depth. A hand dug strip though the remaining soil identified a thin overburden to the south of the area, which only contained occasional pieces of modern brick and tile. However, a layer (50) was identified which was deeper here by 0.2m. A concentration of pottery of Roman date was recovered from this context, from an area of roughly 1m by 1.4m. The mixed date of this material suggests it seems to be a layer of Roman occupation subsoil surviving to the south of the garage, previously undisturbed by the excavation area, immediately to the north.

Finds

Pottery by Jane Timby

Introduction

The archaeological work at Silchester resulted in the recovery of a small assemblage of 50 sherds of pottery weighing 647 g dating to the Roman period. In addition three fragments (373 g) of ceramic building material (CBM) are present. The assemblage came from a single context (50). The sherds are moderately well preserved in terms of sherd size with an average weight of 12.9 g but appear quite abraded in appearance. For the purposes of the assessment the pottery assemblage was briefly scanned to assess its likely chronology and quantified by sherd count and weight for each recorded context. The resulting data is summarised in Table 1.

Description

The assemblage is chronologically quite mixed with sherds of 1st through to later 3rd or 4th -century date. Earlier sherds include two pieces of flint-tempered Silchester ware common in the later Iron Age and early Roman period. Most of the wares suggest a 2nd -century date. These include one sherd of Lezoux samian (LEZ SA) from a cup Dragendorff 27; Dorset black burnished ware (DOR BB1) with a flat- rimmed dish/ bowl and Alice Holt grey wares (ALH RE). The latter include two jars, one a flat-rimmed type (Lyne and Jefferies 1979, type 3A); the other a simple everted rim form, and a flat-rimmed hemispherical dish/bowl typical of the earlier phases of the industry. Evidence of a later Roman component to the group is shown by a sherd of abraded Oxfordshire colour-coated ware (OXF RS) current from the mid-later 3rd century into the 4th century. Other

wares include one grog-tempered sherd; two sherds of sandy grog-tempered storage jar and 11 sherds of unassigned coarse-wares probably from local sources.

Ceramic building material

Three pieces of CBM were recovered two of which are recognisable of Roman roofing tile; one imbrex and one tegula. The third piece is a worn lump. The tegula shows signs of concentric finger scoring on the upper surface.

Summary

The assemblage recovered appears to document occupation at or near the site from the 2nd century onwards although the presence of at least one late Roman piece, if not intrusive, gives a late Roman *terminus post quem*. The complement of wares is entirely within that to be expected from a site within the environs of Silchester.

Conclusion

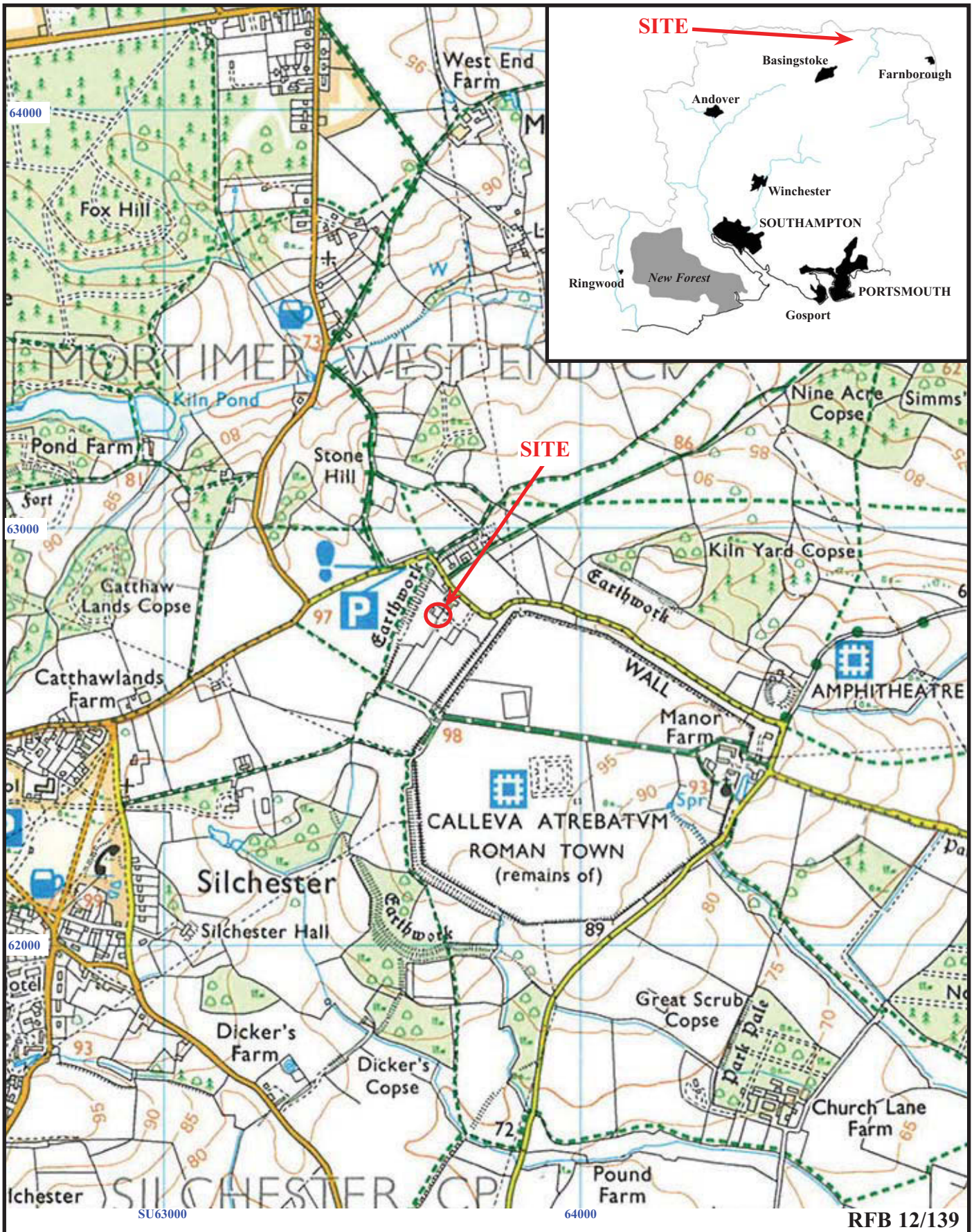
The watching brief for the main house did not, as expected, reveal any deposits of archaeological interest being located to both utilise the existing footings and within an area previously investigated. Again, as intended, an area strip for a new garage was of insufficient depth to expose any archaeological features cutting the natural geology but a layer of uncertain origin was partly exposed which contained a volume of Roman pottery.

References

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- Fulford, M, Rippon, S, Ford, S, Timby, J and Williams, B, 1997, 'Silchester: Excavations at the north gate, on the north walls, and in the northern suburbs 1988 and 1991-3', *Britannia*, **28**, 87-168
- Hammond, S, 2006, 'Chitty Farm, Wall Lane, Silchester, Hampshire: an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Service unpubl rep 06/136, Reading
- Lyne, M A B, and Jefferies, R S, 1979, *The Alice Holt / Farnham Roman pottery industry*, CBA Res Rep 30, London
- Mundin, A, 2008, 'Chitty Farmhouse Extension, Wall Lane, Silchester, Hampshire', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl watching brief rep 08/52, Reading

Appendix 1: Catalogue of pottery

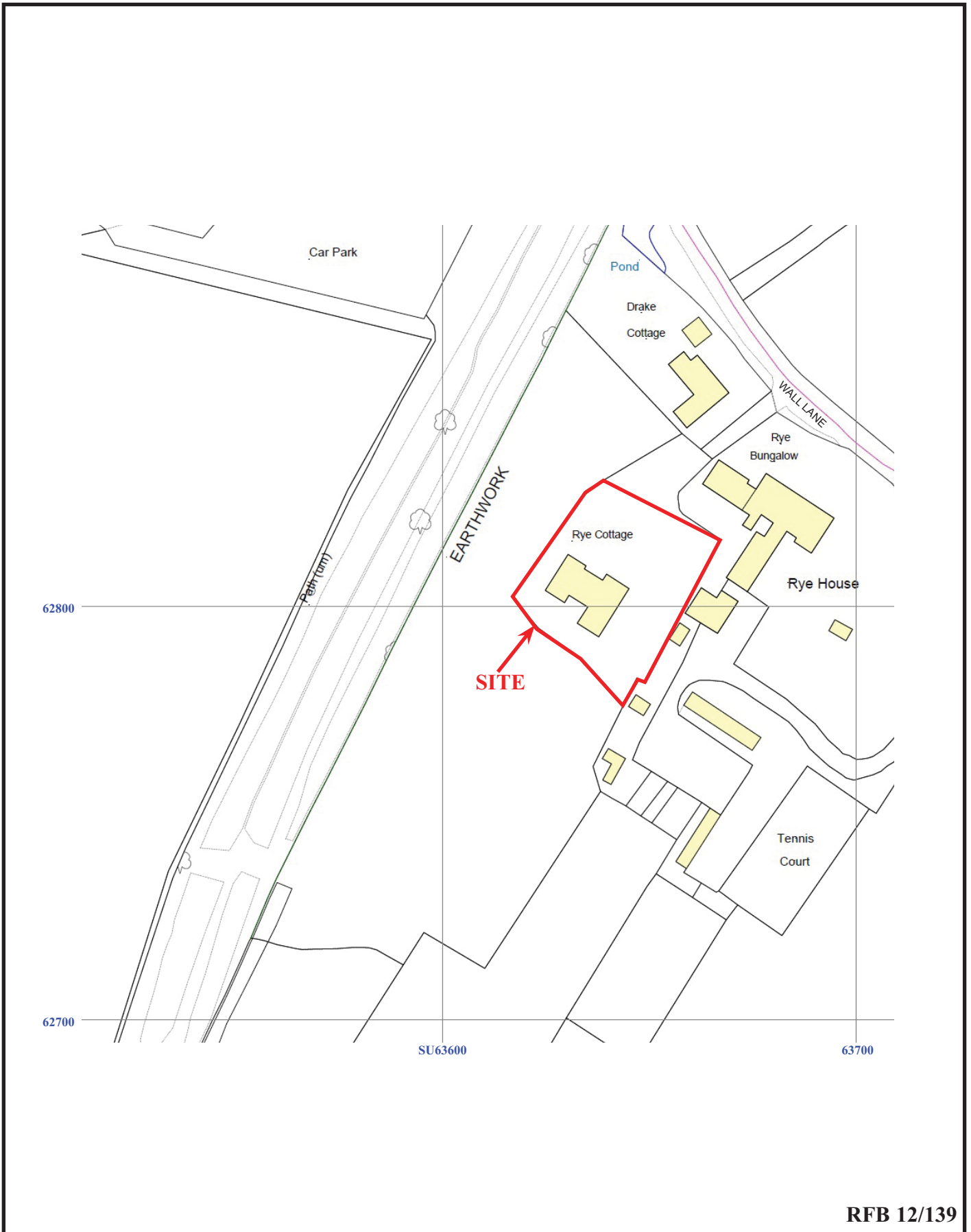
Context	Fabric	Form	Wt (g)	No	Date
50	CBM	tegula	200	1	Roman
50	CBM	imbrex	138	1	Roman
50	CBM	lump	35	1	Roman
<i>sub total</i>			373	3	
50	ALH RE	dish	24	1	C2
50	DOR BB1	bowl	30	1	mid-late C2
50	LEZ SA	Drag 27	4	1	C2
50	ALHRE	2 jars; bodysherds	309	29	C2
50	GRSA	storage jar	65	2	C2-C4
50	DOR BB1	bodysherd	9	1	C2-C4
50	OXF RS	basesherd	9	1	mid C3-C4
50	SILCH F1	bodysherds	22	2	C1
50	MISC CW	x1 bowl; bodysherds	156	11	Roman
50	GROG	bodysherd	19	1	
TOTAL			647	50	



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Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Silchester, *Calleva Atrebatum* and Hampshire.

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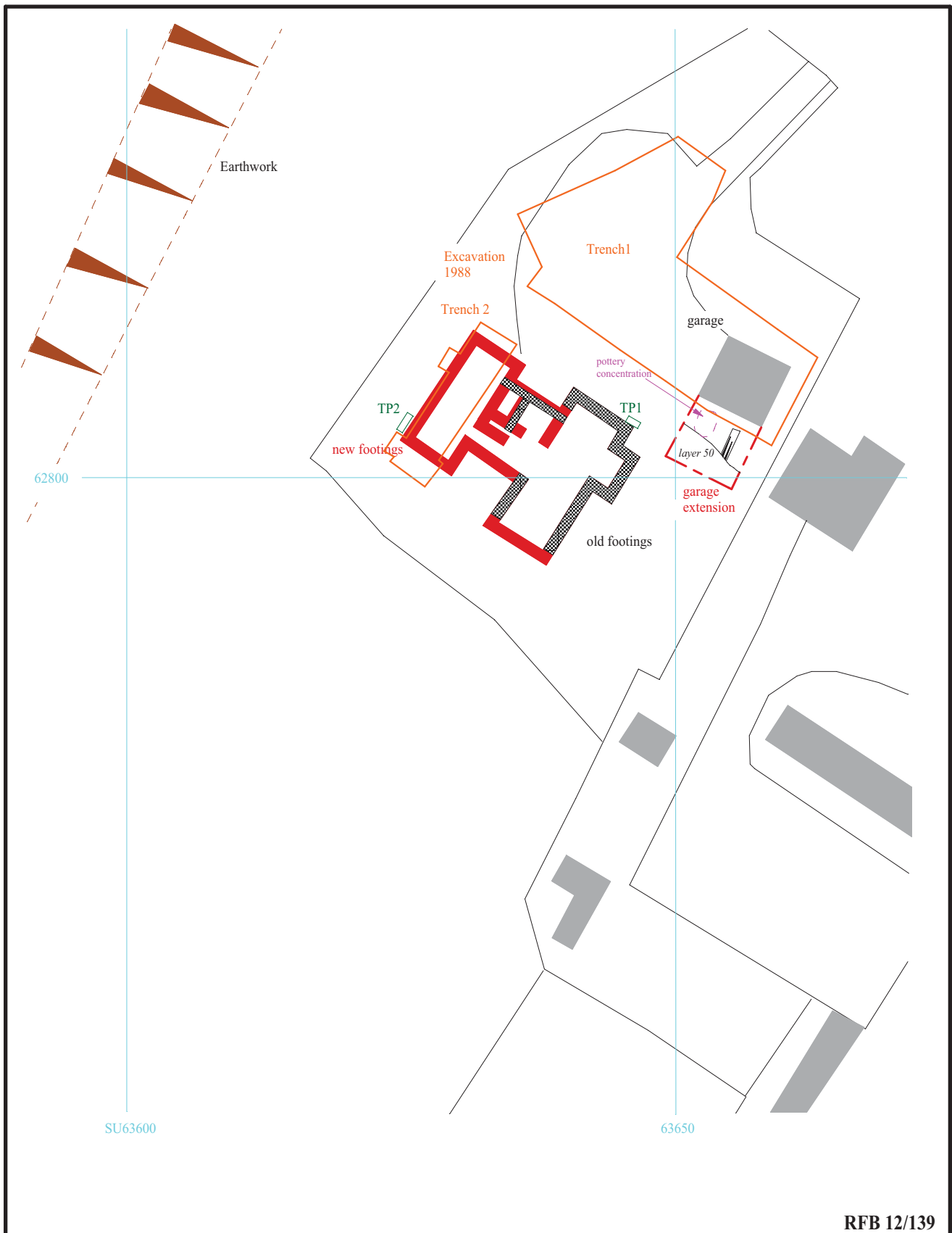


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Wall Lane Road, showing detail of previous dwelling.

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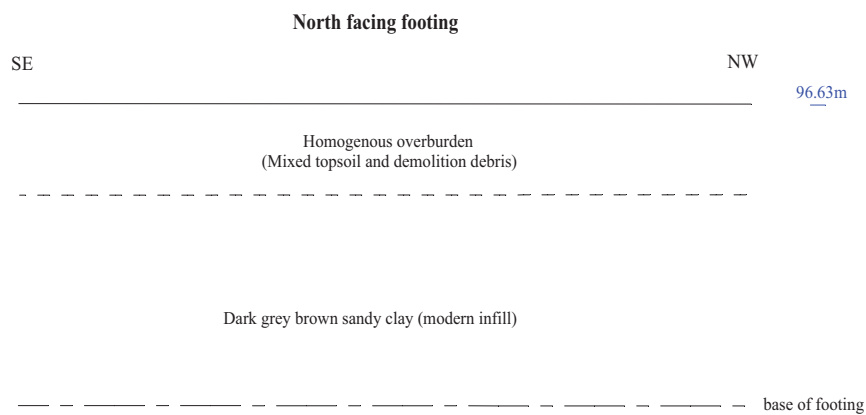
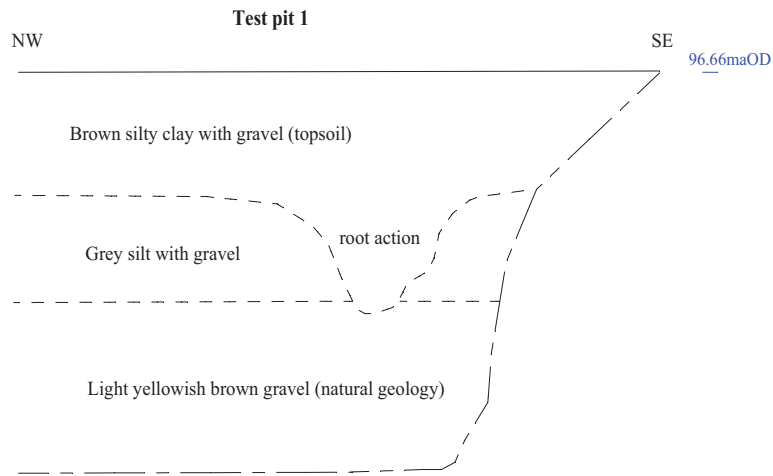
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Figure 3. Detail of observed area and the 1988 excavation.



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Figure 4. Test pit 1 section (northern representation) and footing section in south (southern representation).



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Plate 1. Test pit 1, looking north, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Strip for raft foundation at garage extension, looking north, Scale: 0.5m.

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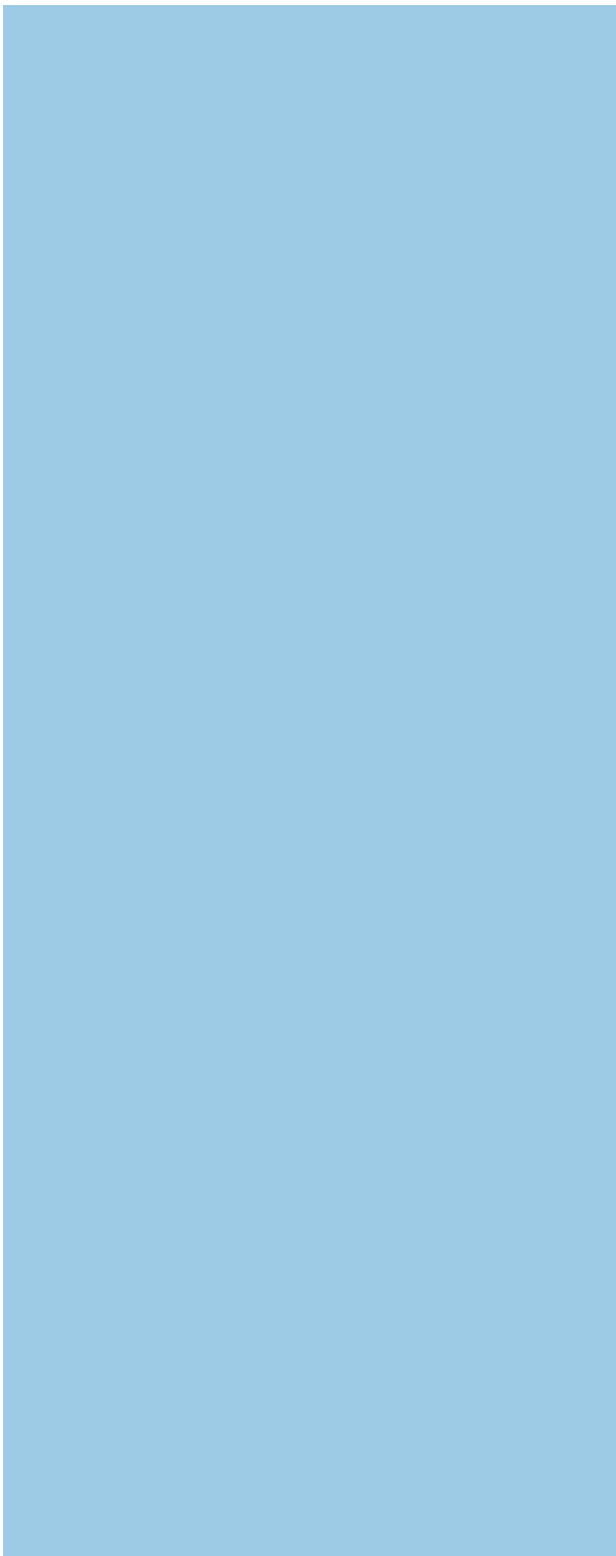
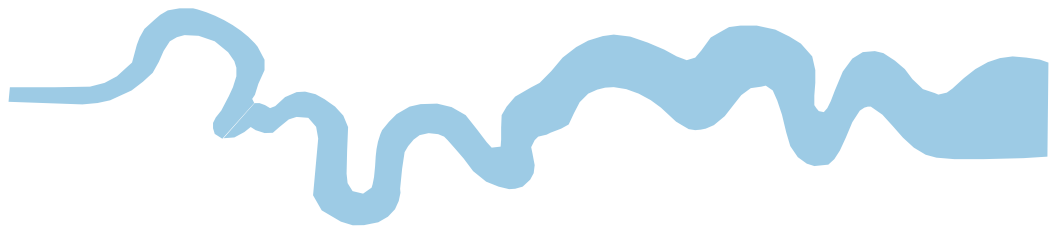
Plates 1 - 2.

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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





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