

T H A M E S      V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Southcote Primary School, Silchester Road,  
Southcote, Reading, Berkshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Daniel Bray and James McNicoll**

**Site Code: SSR14/156**

**(SU6930 7192)**

**Southcote Primary School, Silchester Road, Southcote,  
Reading, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Reading Borough Council**

by Daniel Bray and  
James McNicoll-Norbury  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SSR 14/156

**August 2014**

## Summary

**Site name:** Southcote Primary School, Silchester Road, Southcote, Reading, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU6930 7192

**Site activity:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 7th – 8th August 2014

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Daniel Bray

**Site code:** SSR 14/156

**Summary of results:** A single undated posthole was recorded, though not necessarily of any great antiquity. A sherd of Iron Age pottery and a neolithic or Bronze age struck flint were recovered from subsoil contexts. The site is considered to have low archaeological potential

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

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓22.08.14

# **Southcote Primary School, Silchester Road, Southcote, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation**

by Daniel Bray and James McNicoll-Norbury

**Report 14/156**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Southcote Primary School, Silchester Road, Southcote, Reading, Berkshire (SU 6930 7192) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Gareth Talbot of Hampshire County Council on behalf of Reading Borough Council, Civic Centre, Reading, Berkshire RG1 7AE.

Planning permission is to be sought from Reading Borough Council for the construction of new facilities at the school. It is possible that the development area may contain archaeological deposits and in order to provide sufficient information on the archaeological potential of the site so as to mitigate the effects of the development, a field evaluation has been requested.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Roland Smith, Archaeology Officer at Berkshire Archaeology, advisors to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Daniel Bray and Becky Constable on the 7th and 8th August 2014 with the site code SSR 14/156. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a suitable museum in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located in the grounds of Southcote Primary School to the south of Silchester Road, Southcote, Reading (Fig. 2). The site occupies areas immediately adjacent to the existing school and to the northeast of the main building in what will be a staff car. The site is at c.44.9m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is mapped as Reading Beds (Lambeth Group) - clay, silt and sand (BGS, 1946) which was observed in the trenches..

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location on the margins of the archaeologically rich Kennet Valley with a wide variety of sites and finds recorded, particularly dating from the Roman period (Lobb

and Rose 1996). A number of neolithic or Bronze Age flints recorded to the north west with a gravel pit to the north producing a number of Palaeolithic handaxes. An excavated Iron Age occupation site lies just to the south (Piggott and Seaby 1937) with further Iron Age deposits to the north. The Roman period is represented by a number of Roman coins recorded nearby to the north east and north west with 3 Roman gaming dice just to the north. A Saxon cremation urn was found to the east and Southcote medieval manor lies to the south west.

## **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 specific aims of the project were;

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present; and
- to determine if any archaeologically significant deposits are present so as to inform the development of a mitigation strategy

It was proposed to dig 4 trenches at 10m long, all 1.60m wide to target the footprint of the new structures. The trenches were to be excavated using a JCB-type machine equipped with a toothless grading bucket under archaeological supervision with the spoil removed being monitored for finds. All potential archaeological deposits were to be hand-cleaned and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the project.

## **Results**

The four trenches were dug as intended (Fig. 3). The trenches ranged in length from 9.30m to 10.50m and were between 0.45m and 1.29m deep. All trenches were 1.60m wide. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

### Trench 1 (Figs 3, 4 and Pls. 1 & 2)

Trench 1 was aligned E - W and was 9.30m long and 0.45m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.18m of Tarmac overlying 0.02m of gravel made ground above 0.06m of crushed brick rubble. This in turn overlay 0.15m dark brown clay sand silt which in turn overlay natural geology which comprised an orange brown clay silt. A posthole (1) was recorded which measured 0.40m in diameter and was 0.28m deep and filled with mid orange brown silty sand (51). A single sherd of Iron Age pottery and a prehistoric struck flint were recovered from the trench.

#### Trench 2 (Figs 3 and Pl. 3)

Trench 2 was aligned SE–NW and was 10.00m long and had a depth of 0.45m. The stratigraphy comprised of 0.09m topsoil and 0.21m subsoil overlaying light brown clayey sand natural geology. No archaeological deposits were identified.

#### Trench 3 (Fig. 3)

Trench 3 was aligned SE–NW and was 10.50m long and had a depth of 1.08m. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.21m of topsoil, above 0.14m of yellow brown sandy silt, above 0.45m light brown sandy silt and 0.28m dark brown clay silt overlaying brown clayey sand natural geology. No archaeological features were identified.

#### Trench 4 (Fig. 3 and Pl. 4)

Trench 4 was aligned SE–NW and was 10.40m long and 1.29m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil, above 0.39m dark brown clay silt and gravel above 0.64m orange brown clay silt which overlay clayey gravel natural geology. No archaeological features were identified.

### **Finds**

#### *Struck Flint* by Steve Ford

A single struck flint was recovered from trench 1. It is a broken flake made on flint obtained from the local gravel and is probably of Neolithic or Bronze Age date.

#### *Pottery* by Steve Ford

A single sherd of pottery (1g) was recovered from the subsoil of trench 3. It was black throughout with a fine sand temper. It is probably of Iron Age date.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the archaeological potential of the site only a single feature of possible archaeological interest was identified and very little artefactual evidence was recovered save for a single flint and pottery sherd both of which were recovered from overburden in trench 1. The archaeological potential of the site is considered to be low.

### **Reference**

BGS, 1946, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63,360, Sheet 268, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth

Lobb, S J and Rose, P G, 1996, *Archaeological Survey of the Lower Kennet Valley, Berkshire*, Wessex Archaeol Rep **9**, Salisbury

NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Government, London (TSO)

Piggott, C M and Seaby, W A, 1937, 'Early Iron Age site at Southcote, Reading', *Proc Prehist Soc* **3**, pt 1, 43–57

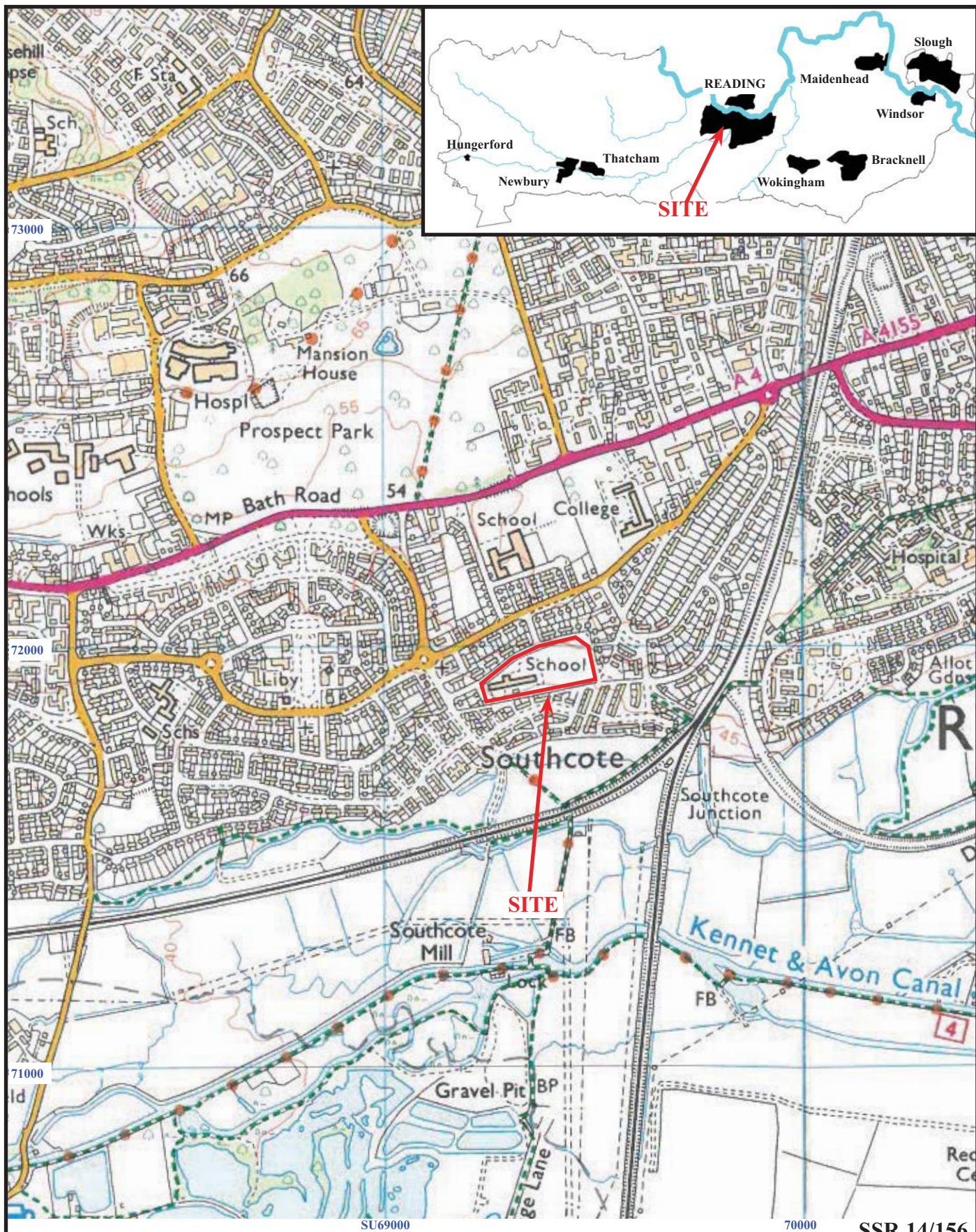
#### APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	9.3	1.60	0.72	0-0.18m Tarmac; 0.18-0.20m yellow gravel; 0.20-0.26m brick; 0.26-0.41m dark brown clay sand silt; 0.41m+ orange brown clay sand (natural geology) Posthole 1 <b>[Pls 1 and 2]</b>
2	10.0	1.60	0.45	0-0.09m topsoil; 0.09-0.30m subsoil; 0.30m+ light brown clayey sand natural geology <b>[Pl. 3]</b>
3	10.50	1.60	1.08	0-0.21m topsoil; 0.21-0.35m yellow brown sandy silt; 0.35-0.80m light brown sandy silt; 0.80-1.08m dark brown clay sand; 1.08m+ brown clayey sand natural geology .
4	10.40	1.60	1.29	0-0.26m topsoil; 0.26-0.65m dark brown clay silt and gravel; 0.65-1.29m brown clay silt; 1.29m+ brown clay silt and gravel natural geology <b>[Pl. 4]</b>

## 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	1	51	Posthole	Unphased	None





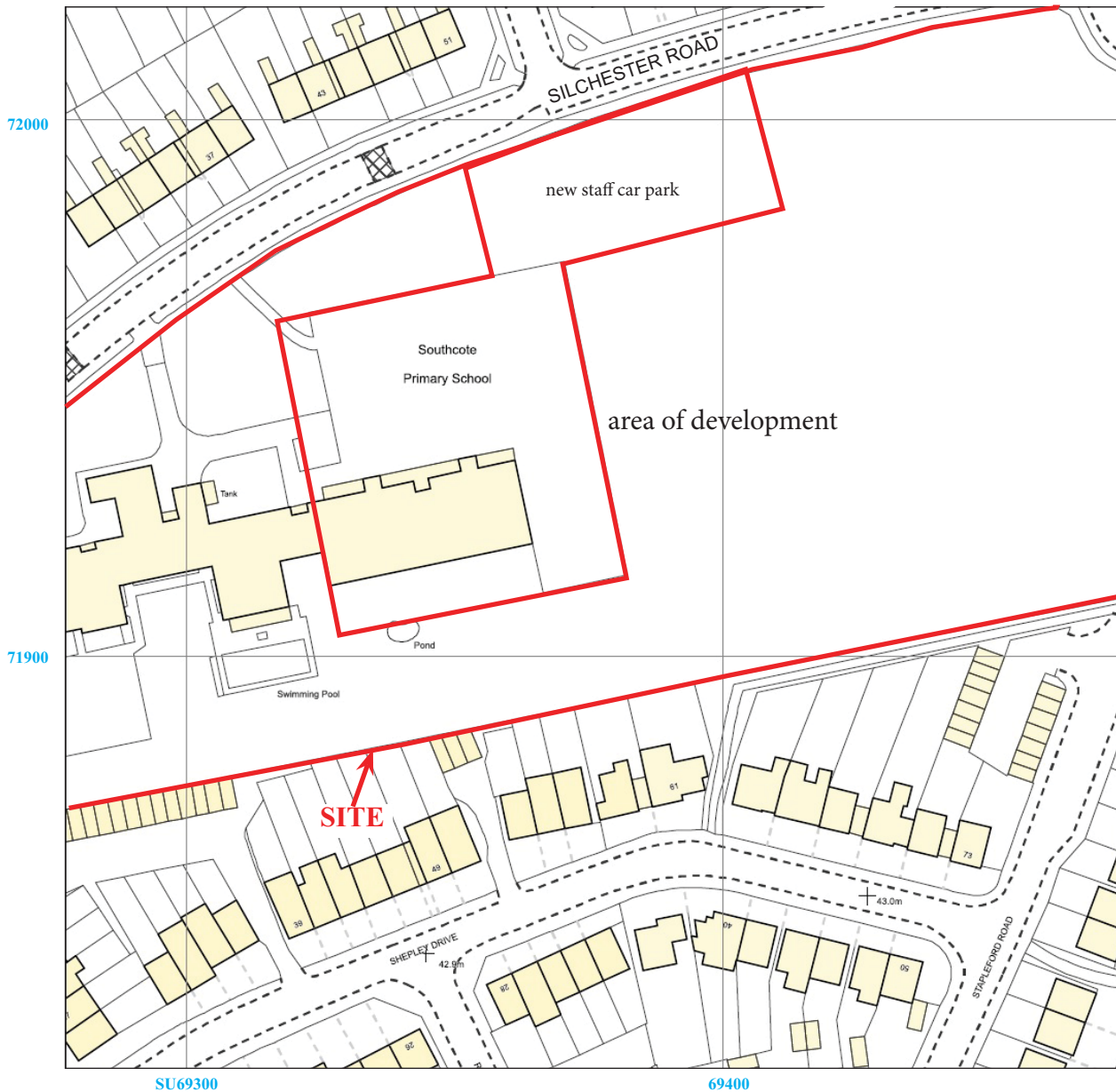
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Figure 1. Location of site within Southcote, Reading and  
Berkshire.

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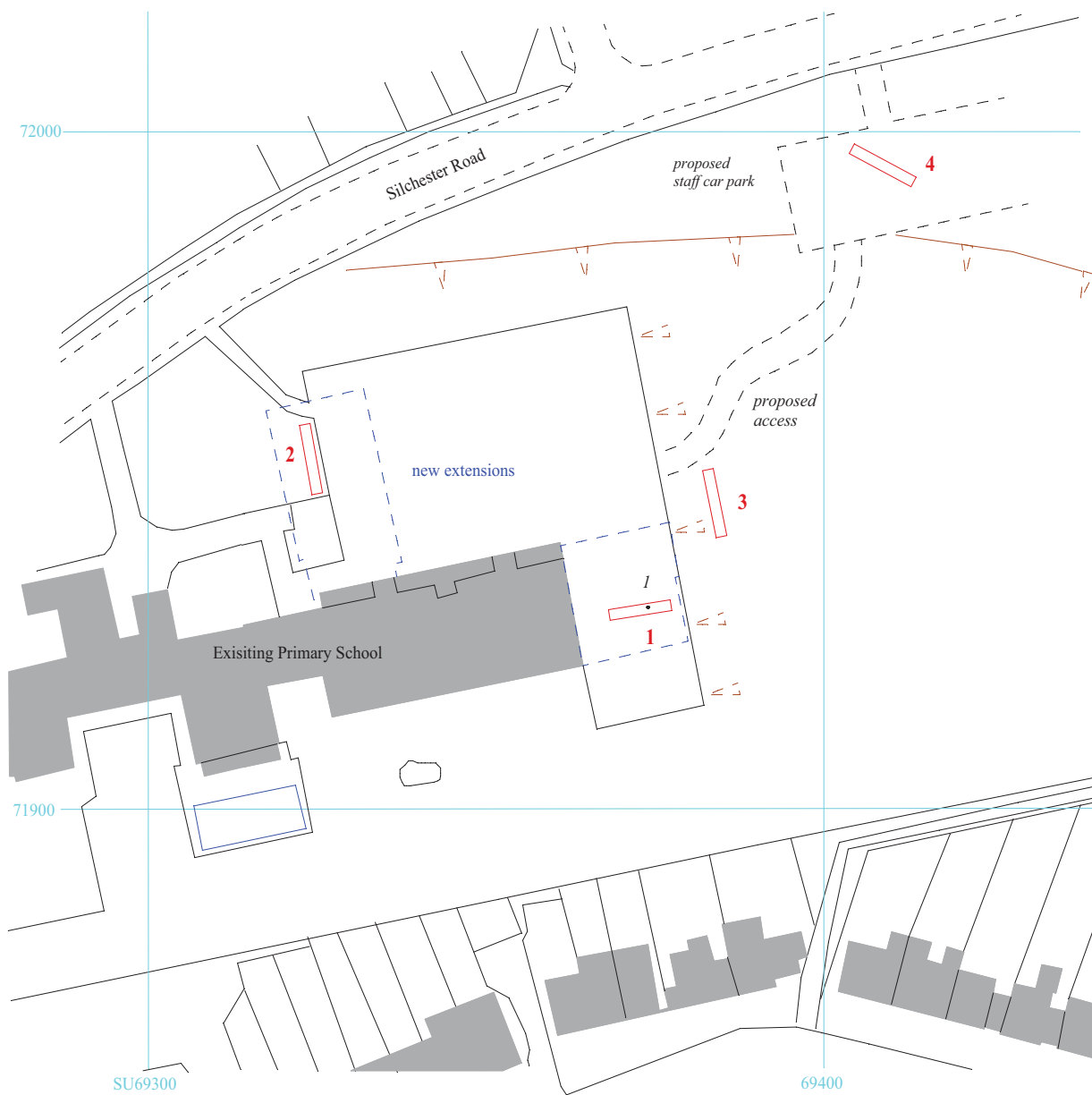


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Silchester Road.

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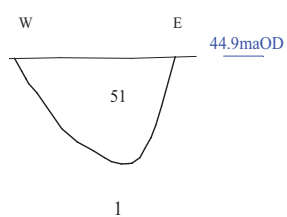
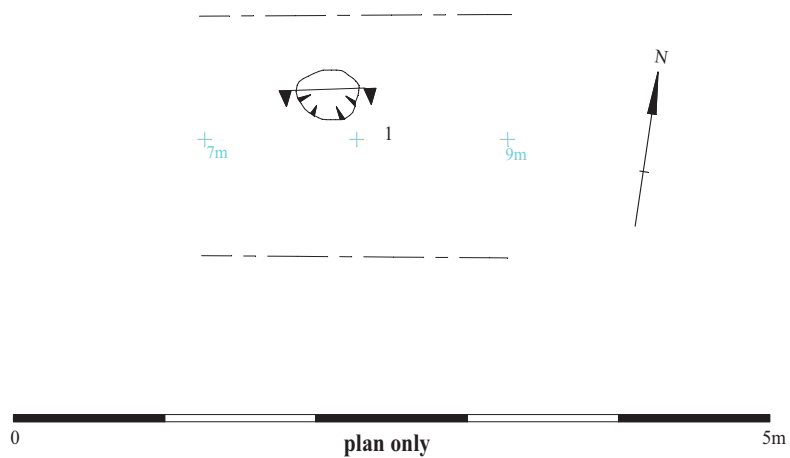
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.



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Trench 1



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Figure 4. Detail of Trench 1.

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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 1, posthole 1, looking north, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.

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Plates 1 - 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 2, looking north west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.1m.



Plate 4. Trench 4, looking north west, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

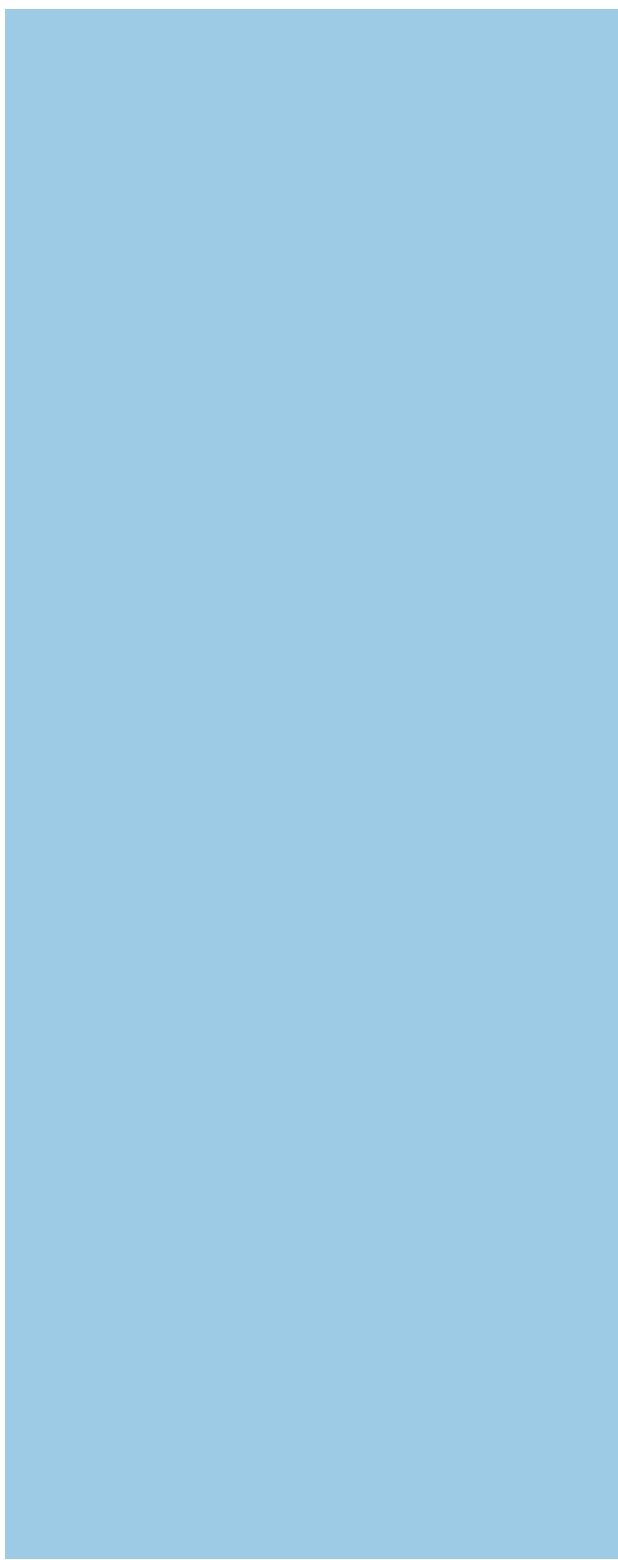
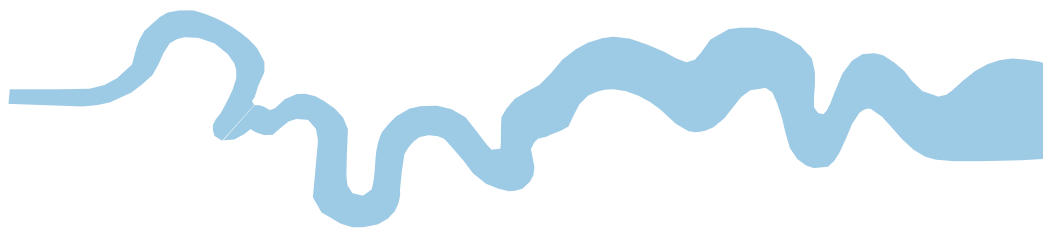
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Plates 3 - 4.

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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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