

T H A M E S      V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Sawyers Land, Wall Lane,  
Silchester, Hampshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Pierre-Damien Manisse**

**Site Code: SLS18/126**

**(SU 6313 6262)**

# **Sawyers Land, Wall Lane, Silchester, Hampshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Mr and Mrs Sturges**

by Pierre-Damien Manisse

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SLS 18/126

**March 2019**

## Summary

**Site name:** Sawyers Land, Wall Lane, Silchester, Hampshire

**Grid reference:** SU 6313 6262

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 20-27th March 2019

**Project coordinator:** Danielle Millbank

**Site supervisor:** Pierre-Damien Manisse

**Site code:** SLS 18/126

**Area of site:** 75m<sup>2</sup>

**Summary of results:** An archaeological watching brief took place to monitor the excavation of footings for an house extension, a soakaway and associated service trenches as well as some ground reduction. No archaeological features or finds were observed during the course of this project.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 29.03.19
	Steve Preston ✓ 29.03.19

# Sawyers Land, Wall Lane, Silchester, Hampshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Pierre-Damien Manisse

Report 18/126

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Sawyers Land, Wall Lane, Silchester, Hampshire (SU 6313 6262) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Sturges of Sawyers Land, Wall Lane, Silchester, Hampshire.

Planning permission (18/00232/HSE) has been gained from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. That included the demolition of an existing garage and its replacement by a two-storey extension to the house, the excavation of a new soakaway and associated service trench. A condition (5) was attached that requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological monitoring during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2018) and the Basingstoke and Dean Borough's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Neil Adam, senior archaeologist for Hampshire County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Pierre-Damien Manisse, between 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>st</sup> March 2019. The site code is SLS 18/126.

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

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the back garden of a property, south of Wall Lane, on the fringes of Silchester village (Fig. 2). Before the current project, the land was a flat plot under turf. A garage partially covered the area. The underlying geology is recorded as is Silchester Gravel, variably clayey and sandy, (BGS 2000). The site lies at approximately 100m aOD.

## Archaeological background

The site is located close to the course of the Roman road between Silchester (*Calleva Atrebatum*) and Cirencester via Speen (*Spinae*) and Wanborough. (Fig. 2). The site lies beyond the immediate vicinity of the Iron

Age and Roman town and beyond the earthwork ramparts of the earlier- pre-wall town. Extensive extra mural settlement is recorded beyond the walls especially along the main roads and the town cemeteries are also located somewhere beyond the town walls (Creighton and Fry 2016; Fulford and Corney 1984; Fulford and Clarke 2011; Ford and Hopkins 2011).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits that could be affected by the groundworks. Any stripping or ground reduction will be done under constant archaeological supervision. Footings and associated service trenches will be observed, the layers recorded and photos taken. This will be done in accordance to the recommendations highlighted in CifA 2014. Spoil heap will also be monitored.

## **Results**

The watching brief was carried out as intended. Footings were dug using a 3 ton 360° tracked excavator . Conditions of observation were considered to be fairly good, with decent light. Spoil was metal detected (with a Fischer F70), to no avail.

### *Soakaway*

A soakaway (**Pl. 1**), 1.35x1.40m across with a depth exceeding 1.60m, was dug at the back of the house. It revealed a simple stratigraphy. A 0.35-0.40m thick topsoil (mid to dark brown loamy silt) overlay a grey sandy clay subsoil, 0.15m thick, with common gravel pieces. This overlay the natural yellow/orange clayey sand and gravel.

### *Footing trenches*

The footings for the house extension consisted of a 6x13.5m perimeter with two additional foundation trenches dug within, dividing it in three equal parts (**Fig. 3, Pl. 2-3**). The ground inside this perimeter had been reduced by about 0.20m. The trenches were 0.70-0.75m wide and 0.80m deep (from turf level). The same stratigraphy was noted as in the soakaway (**Fig. 4**) with additional disturbance caused by several main water service ceramic pipes, old disused iron pipes and concrete footings of the now demolished garage.

## *Services*

Several shallow water service trenches were dug around this new extension, barely reaching the subsoil. A deeper one (PI. 4) connected the house gutters to the soakaway, but again not sufficient to expose the natural geological horizon. It was at its deepest 0.50m deep and 0.30-0.35m wide.

No archaeology or finds were seen throughout the course of this project.

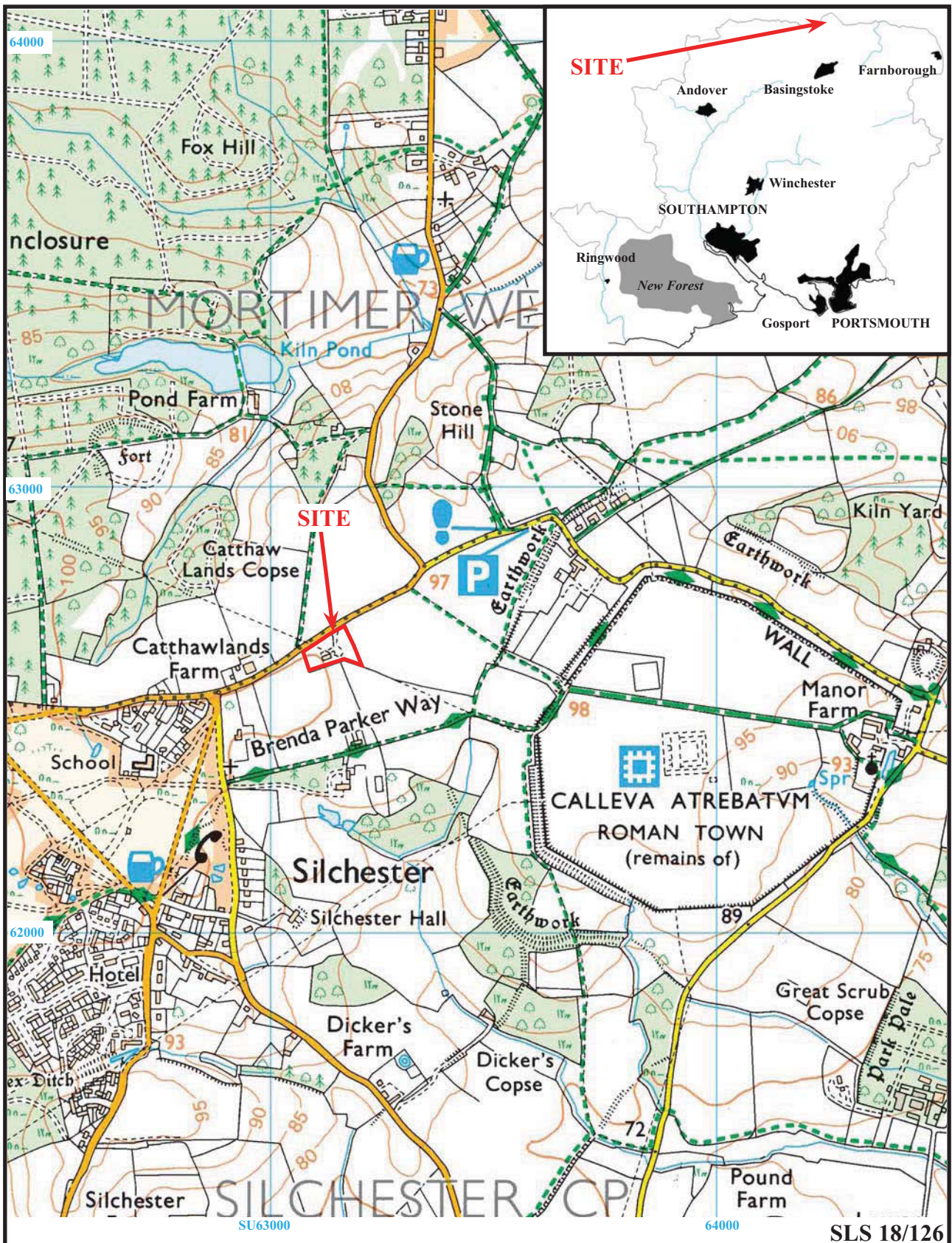
## **Conclusion**

Despite its close proximity to the Roman town of Silchester, no archaeological deposits nor artefacts were observed during this watching brief.

## **References**

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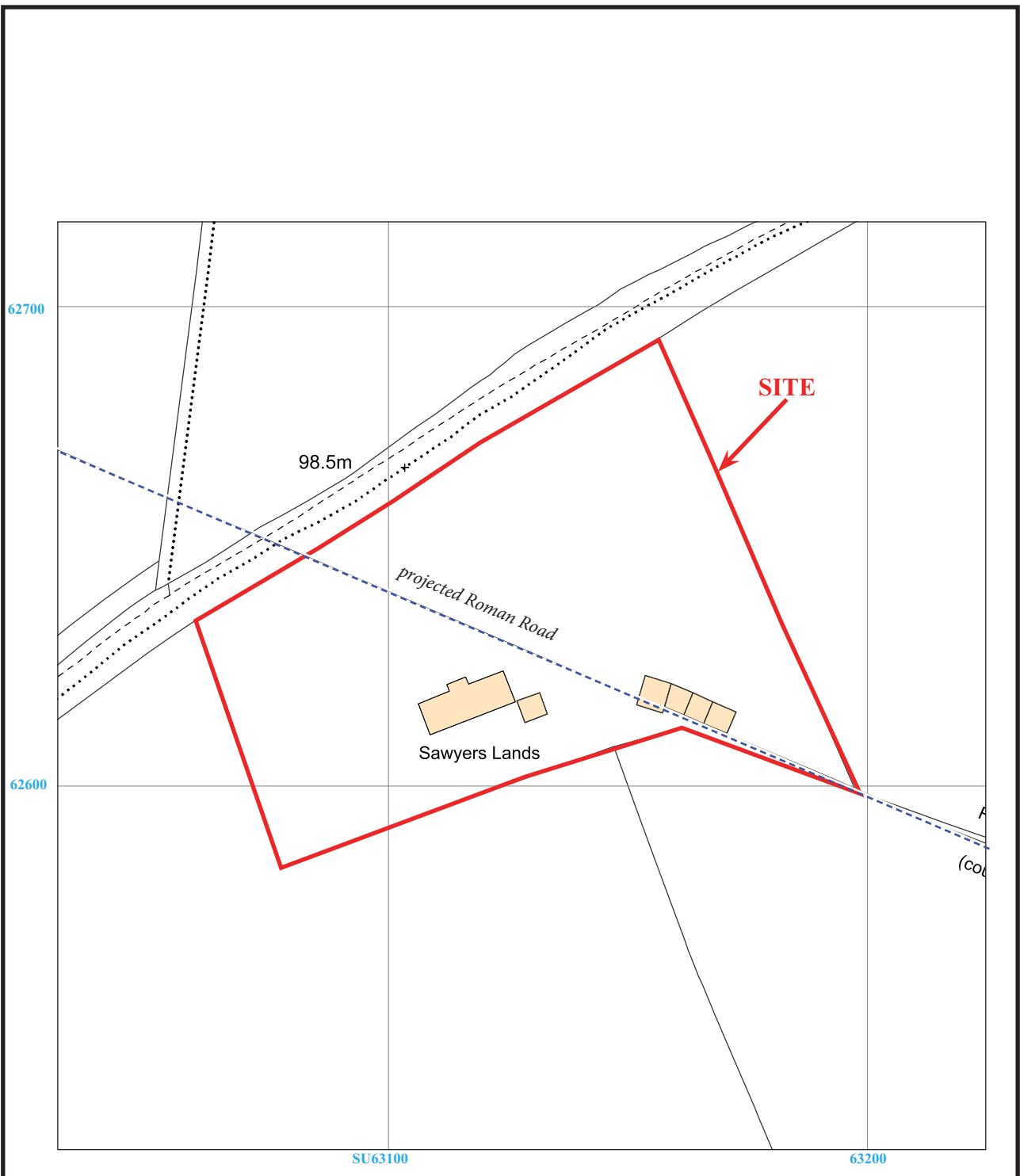
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Figure 1. Location of site within Silchester, the Roman remains of *Calleva Atrebatum* and Hampshire.

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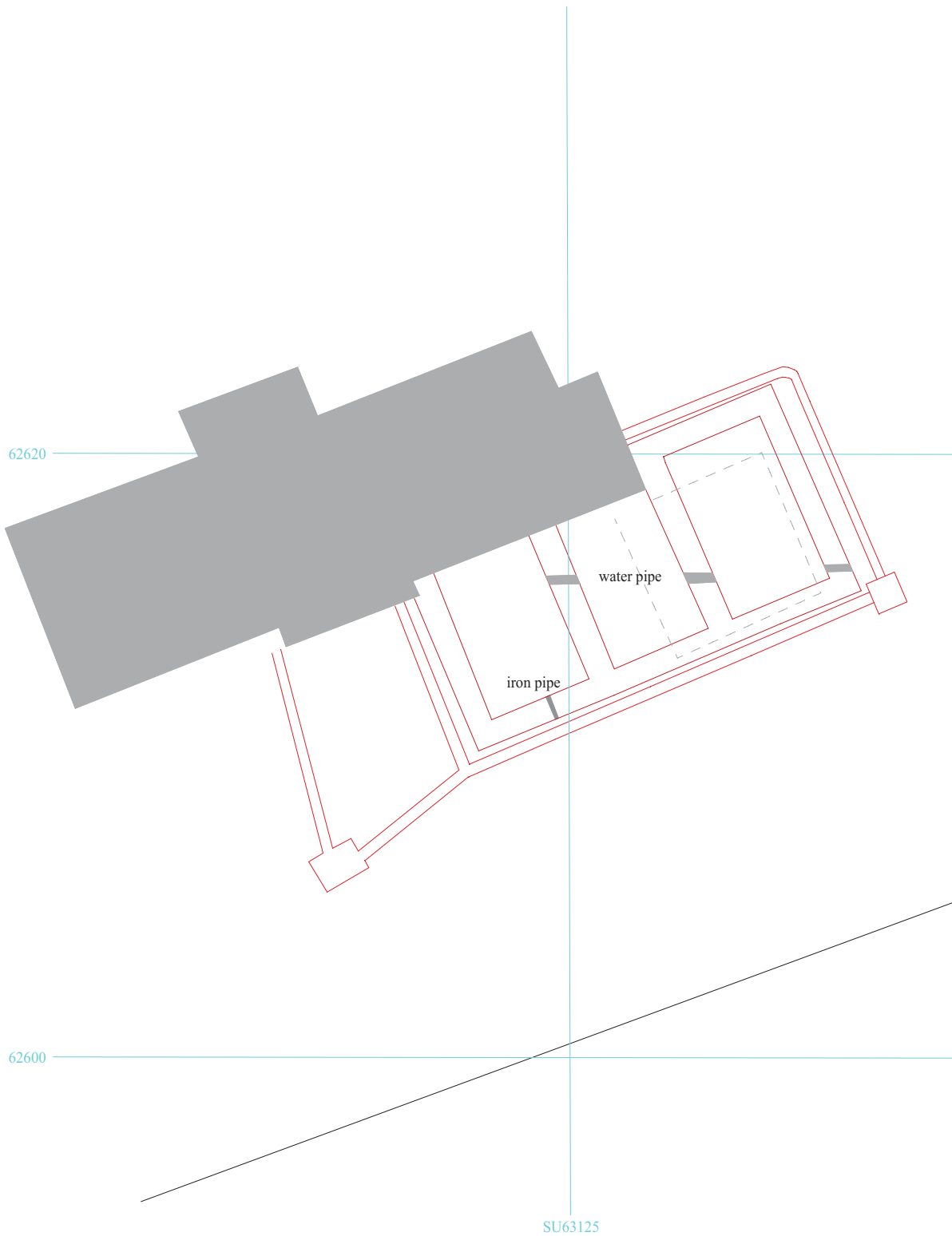
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Wall Lane.

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Figure 3. Detail of development.



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Brown loamy silt (Topsoil)

Grey sandy clay (Subsoil)

Reddish yellow clayey sand (Natural geology)

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Figure 4. Representative section.



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Plate 1. Soakaway, looking SW, Scale: 1m.



Plate 2. Representative section in footing trench, looking SW, Scales: 2x1m.

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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. General view of the footing trenches, looking W, Scales: 2x1m.



Plate 4. Service trench, looking N, Scales: 1m and 0.30m.

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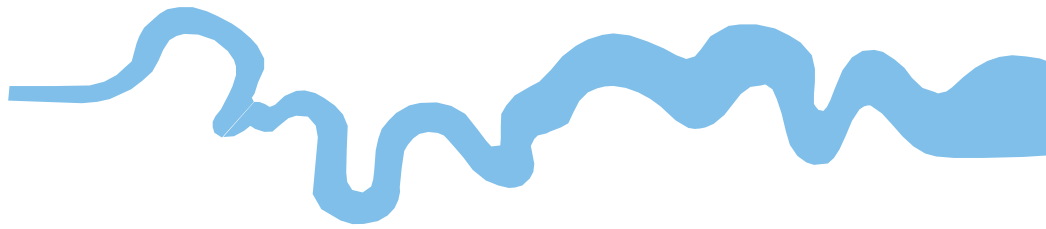
Plates 3 and 4.

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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 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 .....	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper .....	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle .....	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower .....	2,000,000 BC





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