

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Former Reference Library, North Walls,
Winchester, Hampshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Tim Dawson and Jamie Lewis

Site Code: RLW10/71

(SU 4811 2980)

Winchester Reference Library, North Walls, Winchester, Hampshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For CgMs

by Tim Dawson and James Lewis
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code AY 440

July 2010

Summary

Site name: Winchester Reference Library, North Walls, Winchester, Hampshire

Grid reference: SU 4811 2981

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 12th–15th July 2010

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Tim Dawson and James Lewis

Site code: AY440

Area of site: 160 sq m

Summary of results: No archaeological features were found but sherds of Roman and medieval pottery were recovered from the made ground.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Winchester Museum in due course, with accession code WINCM: AY440.

This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 21.07.10 Steve Preston✓ 21.07.10

Winchester Reference Library, North Walls, Winchester, Hampshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Tim Dawson and James Lewis

Report 10/71

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at the Winchester Reference Library, North Walls, Winchester, Hampshire (SU 4811 2981) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Sally Dicks of CgMs Consulting, Morley House, 26 Holborn Viaduct, London, EC1A 2AT.

Planning permission (07/03078/FUL) has been gained from Winchester City Council for the refurbishment of the former reference library and conversion into 13 apartments. The consent is subject to three archaeological conditions (10, 12 and 13) which required the implementation of a programme of archaeological works. In order to assess the archaeological potential of the site an evaluation was undertaken which consisted of three test pits. This identified considerable depths of post-medieval and more modern made ground (WA 2008).

As part of the development a large trench for a soakaway was to be excavated which may be of sufficient depth to impact on any archaeological deposits still present on the site even through the made ground levels, and it was this possibility which prompted the requirement for the watching brief described below. This is in accordance with Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16, 1990) and Winchester City Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification and method statement approved by Ms Tracey Matthews, Historic Environment Officer for Winchester City Council (Dicks 2010). The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Dawson and James Lewis on 12-15th July 2010 and the site code is AY 440.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Winchester City Museum Service in due course, with accession code WINCM: AY440. The site code is AY440 and the TVAS project code is RLW10/71.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the centre of Winchester approximately 500m north of the Cathedral (Fig. 1). The site is bounded to the north by North Walls and the south and east by shops and residential property is situated to the west (Fig. 2). The site is occupied by the buildings that previously held Winchester Reference Library and which were constructed in the 19th century (Dicks 2010). The site is at an elevation of 43m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is Upper Chalk (BGS 1975). This was not observed during the watching brief.

Archaeological background

The site is located within the historic core of the city which has been an area of settlement since the middle Iron Age when a substantial enclosure known as Oram's Arbour was constructed (Qualmann *et al.* 2004). During the Roman period Winchester became a city (*Venta Belgarum*) which subsequently became the capital of Wessex in later Saxon times. The city has been continuously occupied ever since and contains a wealth of complex archaeology. For example, recent work at Staple Gardens to the west found much evidence for occupation beginning in the 10th century and continuing to the 13th which included the remains of one and possibly two late Saxon buildings (Moore and Preston 2008). Subsequent use of that area was as gardens for large houses before more recent infill development. At the new library site to the south-west (AY220), the line of a Roman road was revealed. On the proposal site a few residual pieces of Iron Age and Medieval pottery were recovered from an evaluation exercise which also revealed the depth of post-medieval and more recent made ground (Dicks 2010).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the ground works. Archaeological deposits exposed by the excavation were to be recorded but not further excavated unless threatened by ground works. The excavation of the soakaway trench took place under constant archaeological supervision. A toothed bucket was used to remove the modern tarmac and hardcore and once this had been completed a ditching bucket was used to excavate the remainder of the trench and clean the base. All spoil heaps were monitored.

Results (Figs 3 and 4)

The trench was aligned roughly north–south and measured 15.8m long by 6.4m wide and was from 1.74m deep in the north to 2.16m deep in the south. No archaeological features were identified either in the sides or on the base of the trench, with all material observed being modern made ground (Pl. 1-3). The made ground was formed of up to six layers (Fig. 3; Pl. 2). The top layer (50) consisted of 0.37m of tarmac overlying a layer of crushed red brick. This overlay 0.45m of brown sandy clay (51) which contained frequent pieces of flint and chalk and occasional small pieces of red brick inclusions. Below this was observed a 0.1m thick black layer of black clayey sand (52) and appears to be an old turf line. This probably indicates the previous ground level before library was constructed in the 19th century. In turn this overlay 0.34m of grey/brown clayey sand (53) which contained

occasional chalk and flint inclusions and measured 0.34m thick. A single large sherd of medieval glazed pottery was recovered from this deposit.

The lowest layers comprised a 0.1m layer of chalk (54) above grey/green clayey silt with occasional patches of yellow clay (55) which was observed to the base of the trench. Within this latter deposit were recovered four sherds of Roman, late Saxon and early medieval pottery, animal bone and late post-medieval brick. The pottery is all considered to be residual and this layer is also of no great age.

The east-facing section of the trench differed slightly from the opposite one. The turf line (52) and its underlying layers of grey/brown clayey sand (53) and chalk (54) were not visible in the east-facing section and layer (51) directly overlay (55). Layer (55) in turn was deposited over (56), a mid-dark brown sandy clay which extended to the base of the trench (Pl. 1, 4).

The base of the trench (Pl. 4), once cleaned, consisted of layers (55) and (56) with small irregular patches of chalk, presumably redeposited here as part of a landscaping layer at some point in the site's past. No *in situ* chalk, representing the natural geology of the area, was seen in the base of the excavations.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 5 sherds with a total weight of 72g. It was largely of medieval date, although a single residual Roman sherd was also present. The following fabrics were noted:

Chalk-tempered ware. Moderate rounded and sub-angular chalk fragments up to 2mm. Late 9th – late 11th century (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 189). 1 sherd, 8g.

Fine Sandy Ware. Moderate to dense fine sand < 0.1mm, rare burnt organic material up to 5mm, some fine silver mica. Outer surfaces have pronounced wiping marks. 12th–14th century (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 330). 2 sherds, 33g.

Fine Sandy Glazed ware. Fine oxidized ware with few visible inclusions apart from sparse fine mica flakes and rare rounded ironstone up to 2mm. External orange and green variegated glazed with some copper-spotting. 12th–14th century (McCarthy and Brooks 1988). 1 sherd, 28g.

In addition, a single sherd (3g) of residual Roman greyware was also noted. The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 1. The range of fabric types is fairly typical of sites of the period in the city, and indicates that there was activity in the earlier medieval period, and possibly in the pre-Conquest era. The sherds are all in good condition, and generally fairly large.

Conclusion

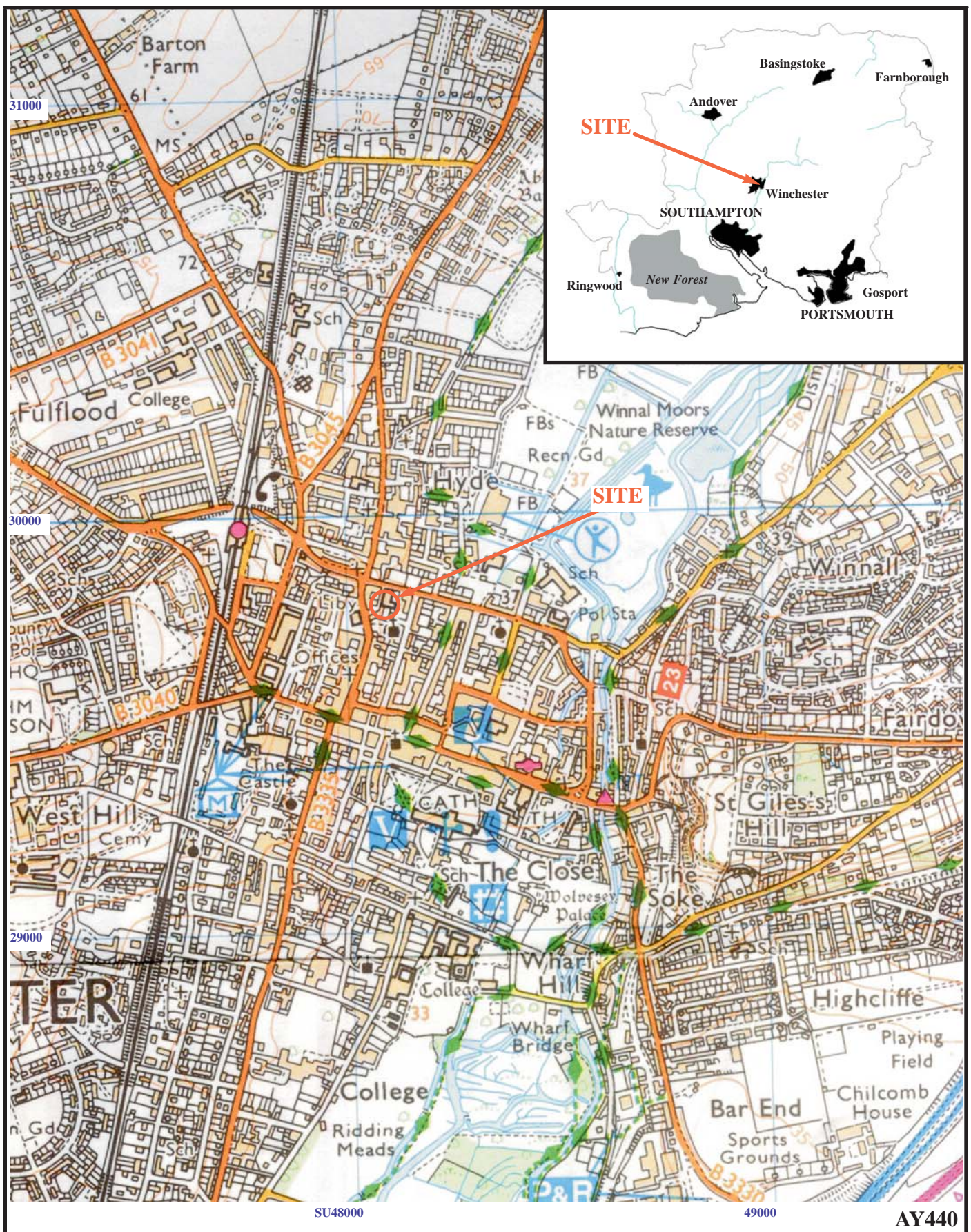
The watching brief has confirmed the findings of the previous evaluation and shown that a considerable build up of made ground took place on the site in the 19th century. A few pottery sherds of Roman, Saxon and medieval date were the only material of archaeological interest recovered; their location within made ground suggests that they were brought onto the site from elsewhere.

References

- BGS, 1975, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50 000, Sheet 299, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Dicks, S, 2010, 'Former Winchester Reference Library, Winchester Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological monitoring exercise', CgMs Consulting, London.
- McCarthy, M R and Brooks, C M, 1988, *Medieval Pottery in Britain AD900-1600* Leicester
- Moore, H and Preston, S, 2008, 'Late Saxon and Early Medieval occupation at 26-27 Staple Gardens, Winchester', *Hampshire Stud* **63**, 135–78
- PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, DoE Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
- Qualmann, K E, Rees, H, Scobie, G D and Whinney R, 2004, *Oram's Arbour: the Iron Age Enclosure at Winchester, volume 1: Investigations 1950–1999*, Winchester
- WA 2008, Hampshire County Council Reference Library and Library Headquarters: 81 North Walls, Winchester. An Archaeological Evaluation. Wessex Archaeology project, 70220, Salisbury

APPENDIX 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

<i>Context</i>	<i>Roman</i>		<i>Chalk</i>		<i>Fine Sand</i>		<i>Glazed</i>	
	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>
53							1	28
55	1	3	1	8	2	33		
Total	1	3	1	8	2	33	1	28

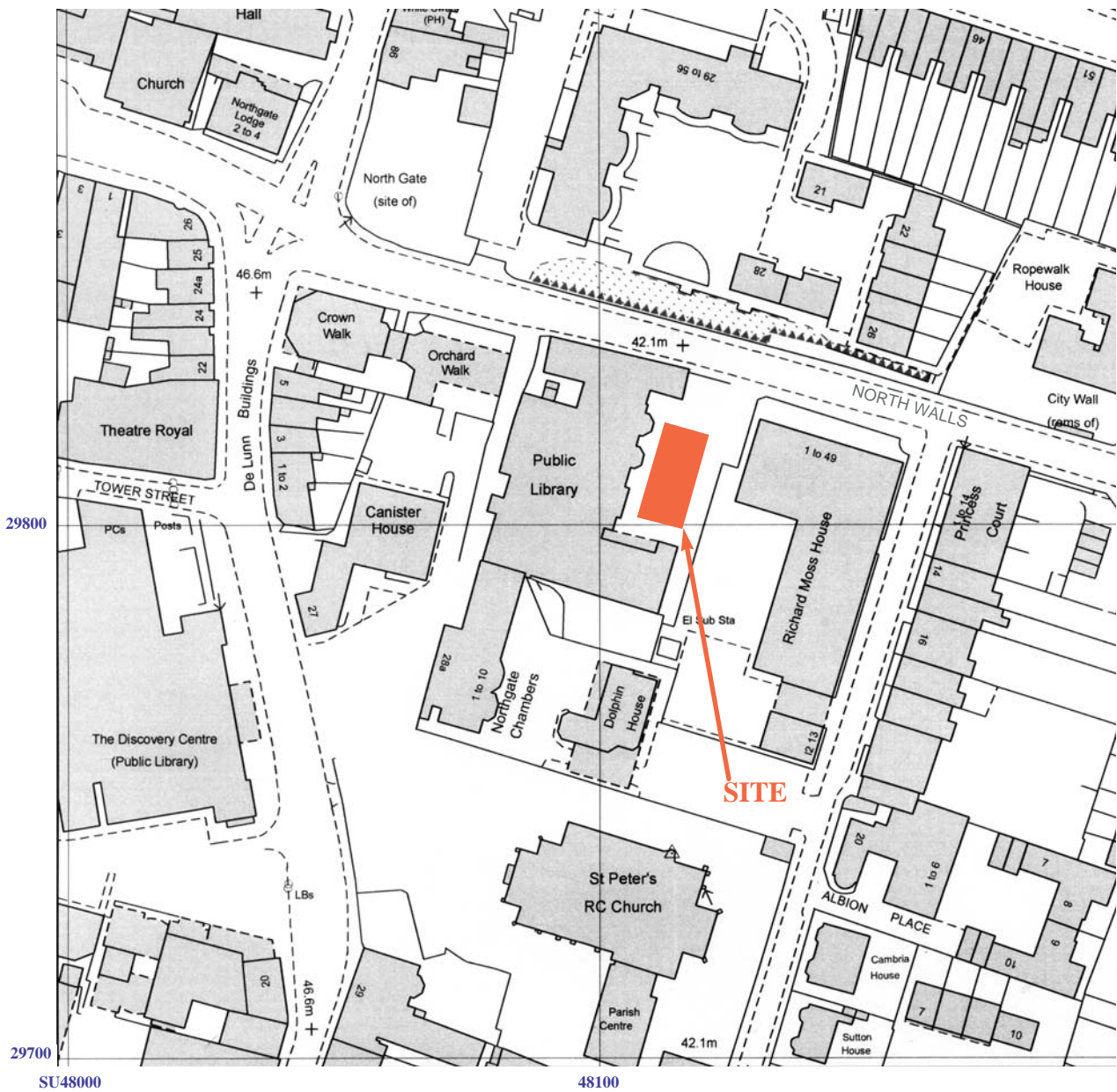


**Former Winchester Reference Library, North Walls,
Winchester, Hampshire, 2010
Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within Winchester and Hampshire.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Explorer 132 at 1:12500
Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

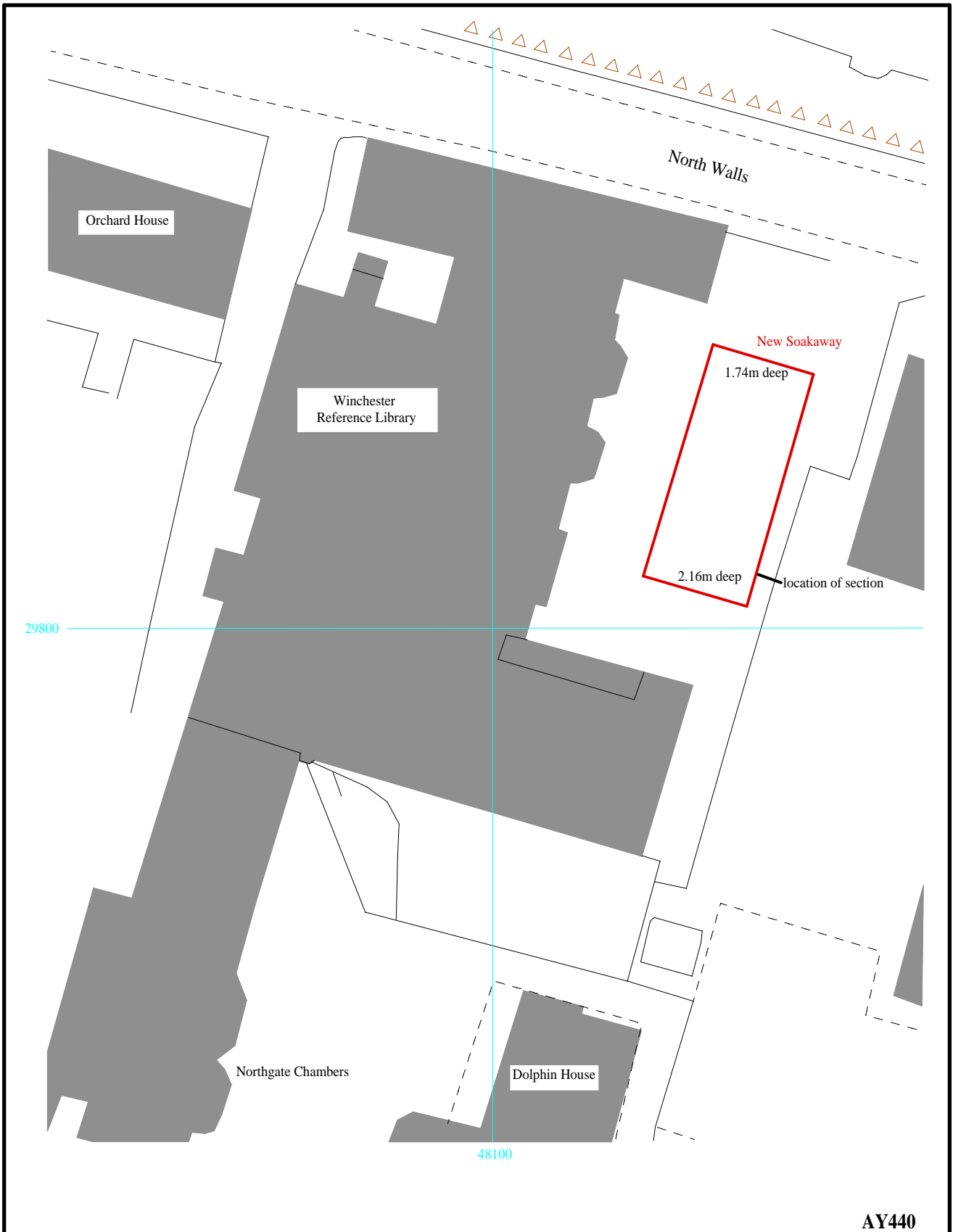


AY440

**Former Winchester Reference Library, North Walls,
Winchester, Hampshire, 2010**
Archaeological watching brief
Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



AY440

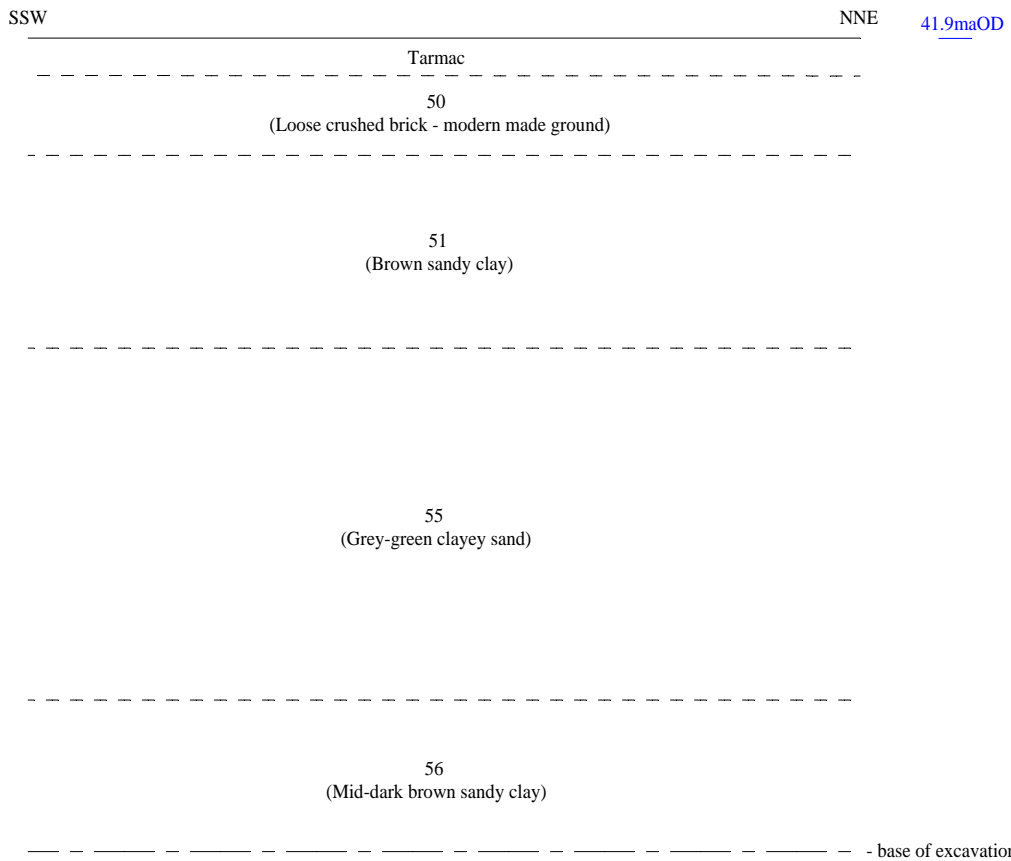
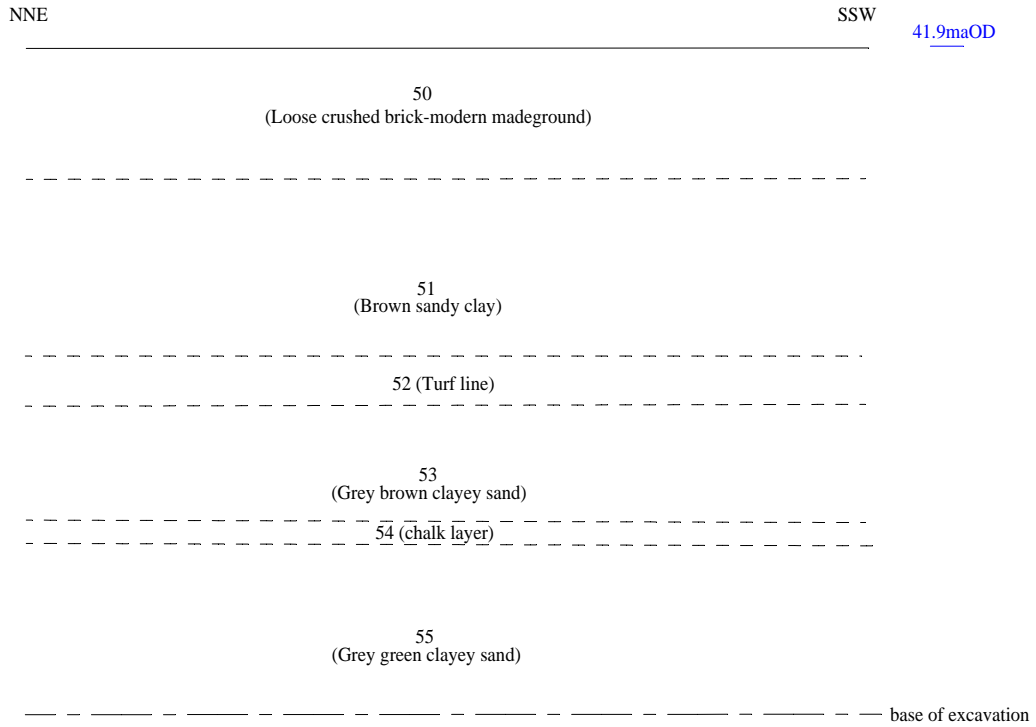


**Winchester Reference Library,
North Walls, Winchester, Hampshire, 2010
Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 3. Location of soakaway.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



AY 440

Winchester Reference Library,
North Walls, Winchester, Hampshire, 2010
Archaeological watching brief

Figure 4. Representative sections.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 1. Soakway excavation, looking north-west, scales: 1m and 2m.



Plate 2. Representative section, looking east; scale: 2m.

AY440

**Former Winchester Reference Library, North Walls,
Winchester, Hampshire, 2010**
Archaeological watching brief
Plates 1 and 2

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 3. Soakway excavation, looking east, scales: 1m and 2m.



Plate 4. Base of soakway excavation, looking east, scales: 1m and 2m.

AY440

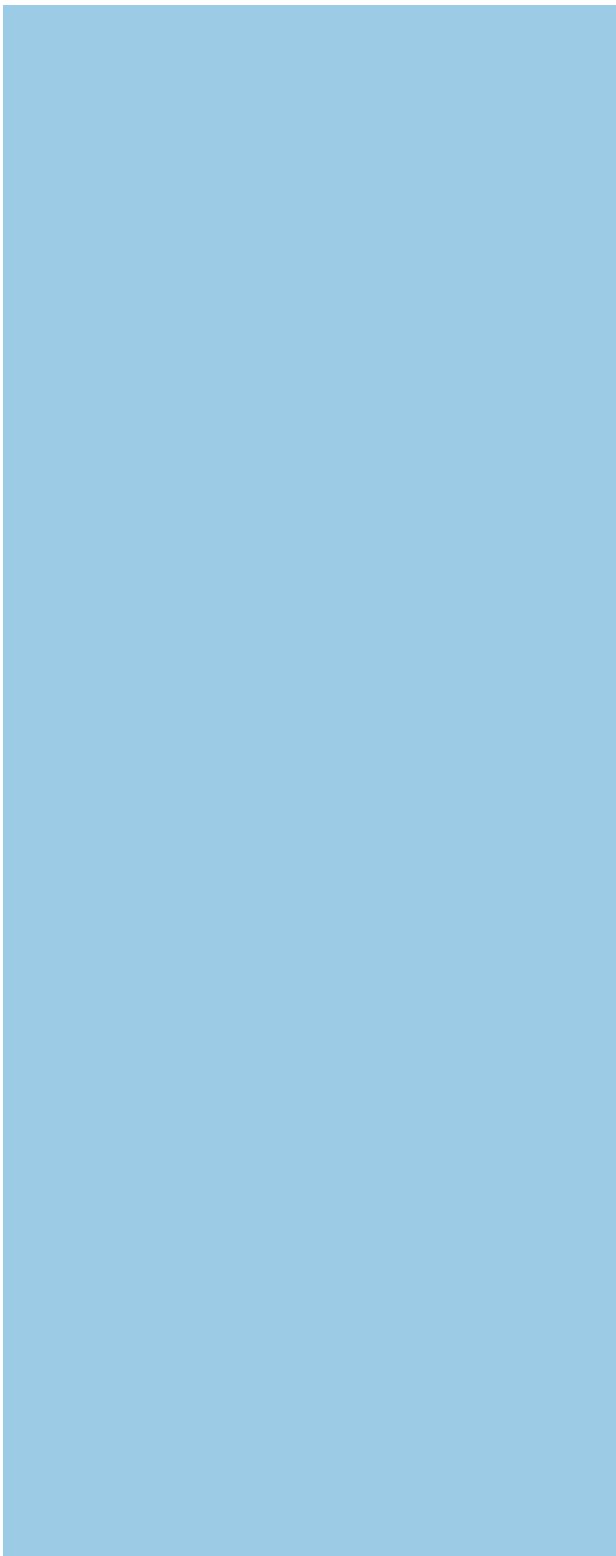
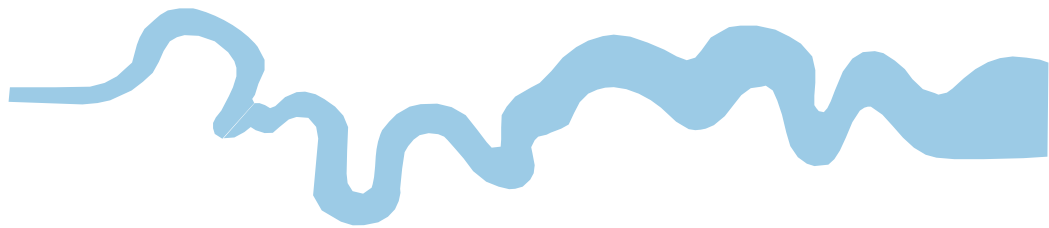
**Former Winchester Reference Library, North Walls,
Winchester, Hampshire, 2010**
Archaeological watching brief
Plates 3 and 4

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**