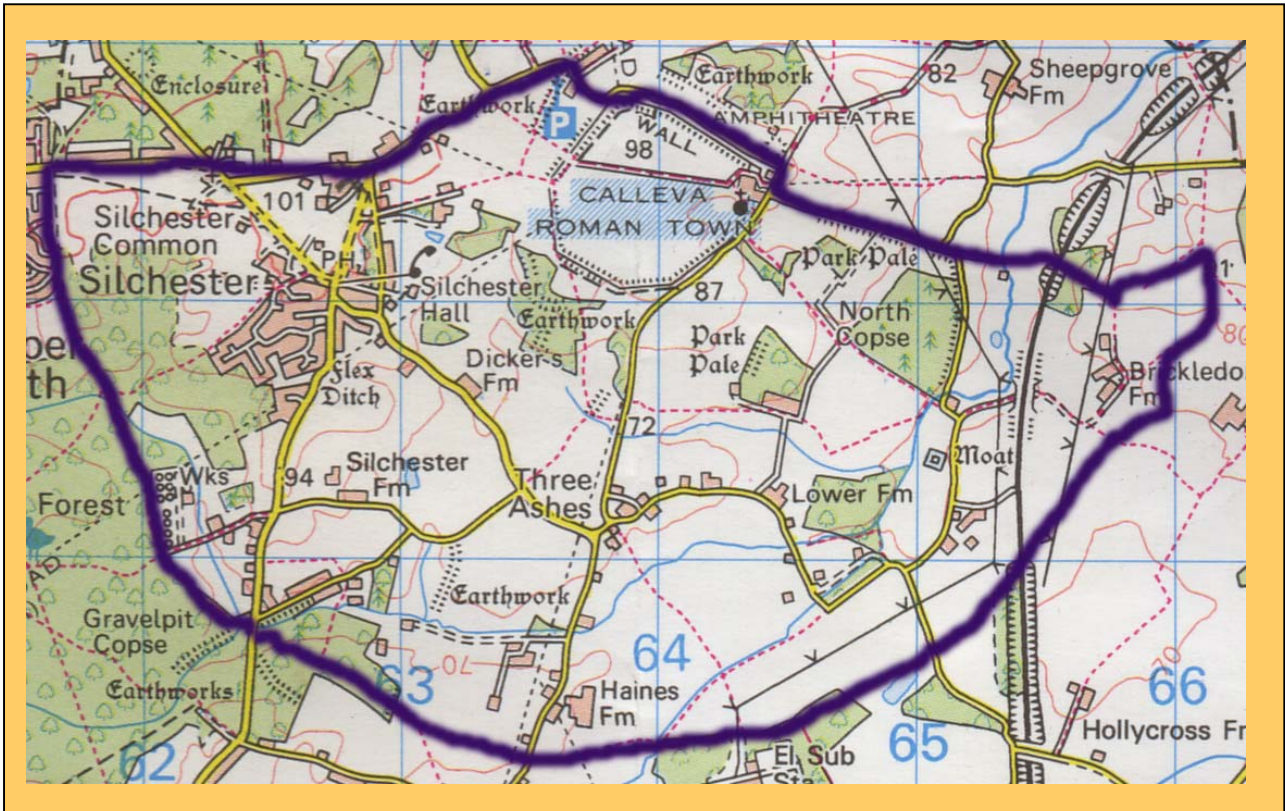




## SILCHESTER VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

5 APRIL 2007



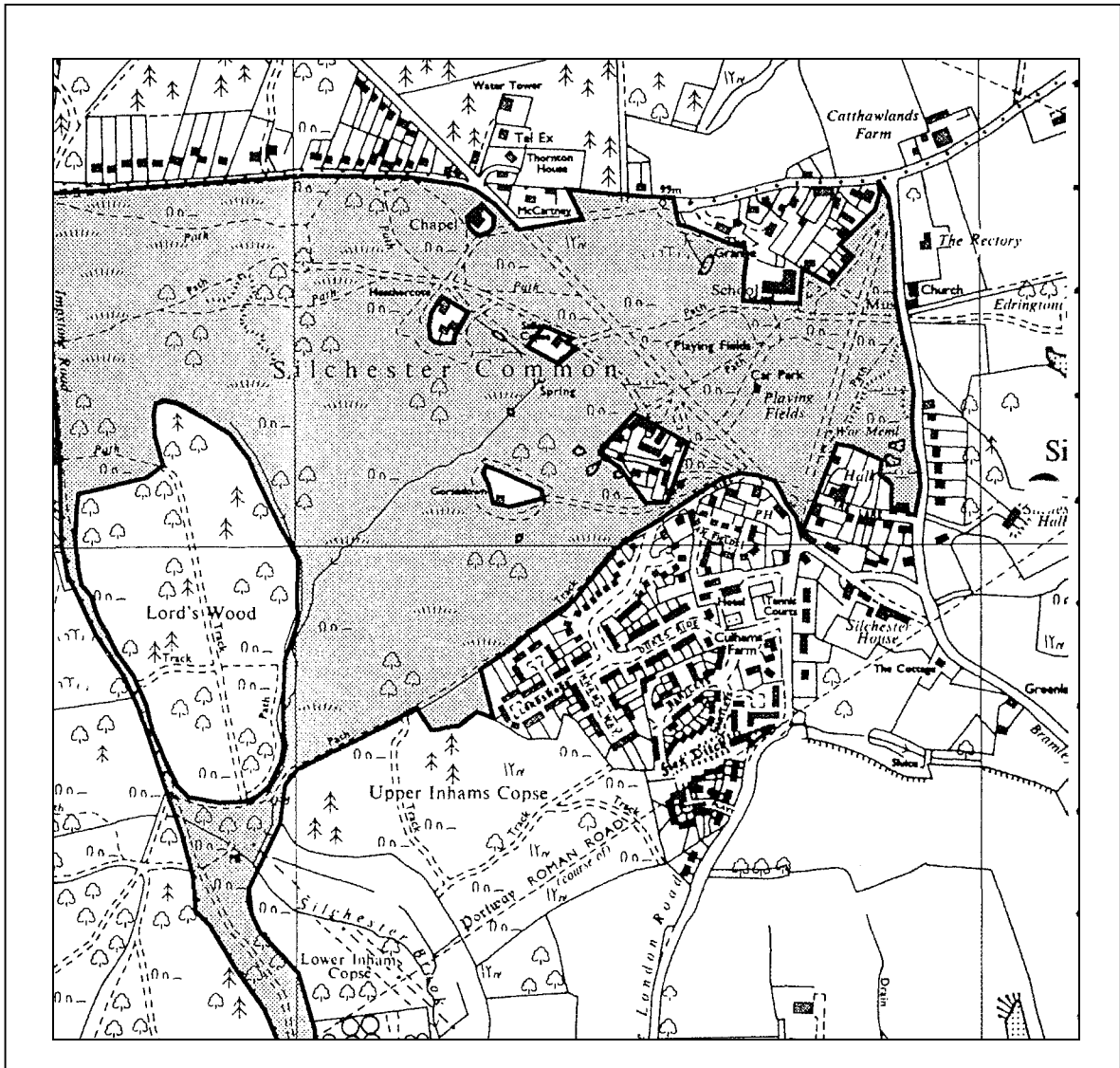


## The Silchester Parish

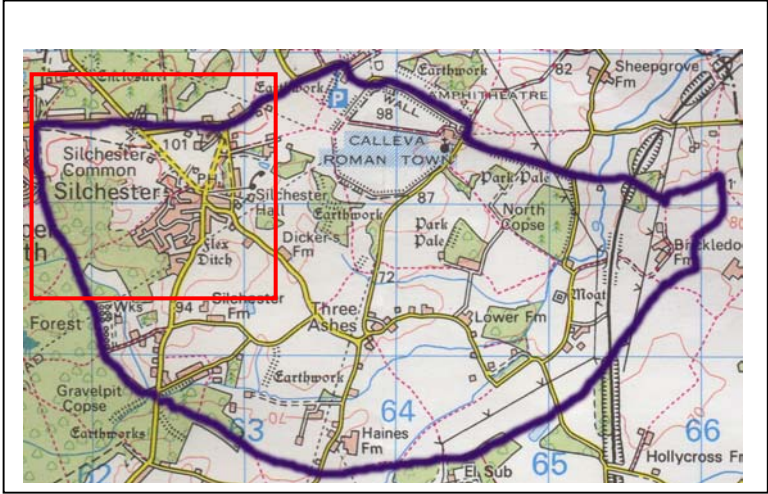
Map of Silchester Parish reproduced by kind permission of the Ordnance Survey

## VISION STATEMENT

*Silchester is a beautiful part of Britain's historical, built environment and its villagers are proud of its appearance and amenities. The villagers support sustainable and appropriate development typified by the affordable rural housing built within Silchester's southern boundary during the late 1990s. We are dedicated to maintaining the environment whilst accommodating appropriate developments in lifestyle and technology, creating opportunities for villagers now and in the future to bring back the skills and wealth they gather elsewhere whilst protecting the unique character of Silchester for posterity.*



Density map of Silchester showing the main centre of population. The red box on the Parish map below shows the bigger picture.

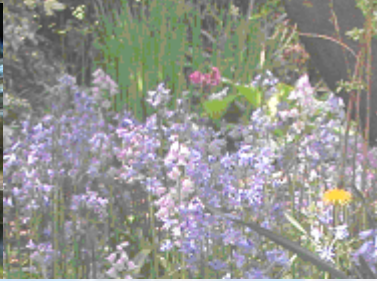




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## Introduction

### What is a Village Design Statement?

A Village Design Statement describes the distinctive character of a village and the surrounding countryside. It delves back into the past to give a historical perspective on how the community has evolved over the centuries. It describes the current environment, including the prevailing architectural styles in evidence and the traditional building materials typically used. It is also an opportunity for local people to influence the planning process within their own area.

### Why produce one for Silchester?

This Village Design Statement is intended to ensure that future development and change within the parish are based on an understanding of the area's history and present character. It draws attention to what is special about the buildings, heathlands, old woods and even older Roman remains to be found within the Silchester parish boundaries. Local character could easily be threatened by unsympathetic development.

The Silchester Village Design Statement therefore aims to raise awareness of what is special about this area, and at the same time gives parish residents a say in the future of their village by producing guidance on respecting these qualities.

Providing these views now in this format is a way of ensuring that the voice of the local community is heard before rather than after any major planning decisions are taken that may affect the essential character of Silchester.

### Its main aims

It has three main aims:

1. To give the local community an opportunity to describe where they live and what is special about it
2. To deliver a well-presented and easily understood account of these views
3. To provide local residents, businesses and organisations and potential developers with a single source of information about what factors need to be taken into account when considering developments large or small within the parish.

### How it was produced

The information in this document was put together by the residents of Silchester with the full support of the Parish Council. It is the result of public consultation within the whole parish at all stages including:

- Public meetings, workshops and exhibitions
- Input from Parish Council members, Silchester Association members, youth groups and members of the Parish Church
- Articles in the parish magazine and letters to the entire village
- Projects undertaken by local school children
- Opportunities for all residents to comment
- The Silchester Conservation Area Appraisal document
- Consultation with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) planning officers

The public meetings were well attended and the workshops and exhibitions resulted in large numbers of comments and suggestions. The Silchester Village Design Statement has attracted considerable interest from the whole village. A timetable of all public VDS events is shown on page 11. A detailed record of all these activities is available for inspection via the Silchester Parish Council.

### Other Planning Guidance

- The Silchester Village Design Statement (VDS) was adopted by the Borough Council on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2007 as informal planning and design guidance pursuant to Objective 7 of the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Local Plan 1996-2011. Further material weight will be attached to the VDS through the adoption by BDBC of a Supplementary Planning Document on 'Design and Sustainability'.



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## History

### Early influences

The name Silchester suggests closeness to a Roman fort, and to the east of the present village, is the site of the Iron Age town of Calleva Atrebatum. The Belgic tribe of the Atrebates, fleeing from Caesar in Gaul c.50BC, settled on a high gravel plateau, later called 'Calleva Atrebatum' - the town in the woods of the Atrebates. The woods provided fuel, crops were grown and cattle pastured in the fields.

After the Roman invasion of 43AD, the Romans adopted the site as an administrative centre and developed a town there. Calleva was prosperous, a centre for the administration of local justice and collection of taxes from a large surrounding area. The Roman integration and influence here was peaceful. The town is the focus of a number of roads, which in places still dominate the landscape, often being long and straight in their course. The Roman remains occupy a lozenge-shaped site at the northern edge of the parish and five or six Roman roads radiate from it. The present church occupies a site at the eastern edge of the walled area, one mile away from the centre of the present Silchester village.

### The Middle Ages

Calleva's glory faded as trade routes shifted. The Roman Army withdrew its support and Saxons invaded from the north. Little more is known until a Domesday Book entry in 1086, which records two manors for Silchester, as it had then become known, one of which became the parish of Mortimer West End. The other, with a population of fifty to sixty people, was located around the Manor House and The Pound and this became the original parish of Silchester. Today, these two parishes probably reflect the extent of the Roman 'territorium' centred upon Calleva.

During the middle ages, Silchester was a small settlement. King John visited it in May 1215, when he stayed with Ralph Bluet, Lord of the Manor at the time. A later visitor was Queen Elizabeth I in September 1601; she passed through the settlement on her way to Basing House to the south.

The essential settlement pattern of Silchester is a reflection of the ad hoc development of the village between the early 14<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, possibly as a result of the absence of a lord of the manor, between 1316 and 1828. It is probable that the population expansion following the Black Death caused the settlement to shift focus from the church and The Pound to the heathland in the west of the parish which is today its main centre.

### Calleva Atrebatum

The Iron Age and Roman settlement of Calleva Atrebatum lies in the north of the parish of Silchester. The site is remarkable because, unlike most large Roman towns in Britain, it was completely abandoned. The defensive walls still survive, in places more than 4m high, but within the walls there seems, at first, to be nothing but fields, a church and a single house; but this apparent lack of observable Roman remains is deceptive.

The most impressive remains of the Iron Age period are the earthworks to the west of the Roman town wall. Along part of the section to the south-west, in Rampier's Copse, the crest rises almost 5m above the ditch. Within these earthworks, excavations have revealed evidence from about 25BC.

In the Roman period, Silchester was one of the most important towns in Britain. It is difficult to estimate the population of the town at its greatest, but based on the knowledge we have of the number of residential buildings on the site, a maximum number of 7500 has been suggested. Even at its minimum estimate of 1200 souls, it would still have been larger than the present population of Silchester. The town may have attained the status of a municipium where all the citizens were entitled to vote on issues affecting the general community.

One of the most characteristic features of the site is the amphitheatre, today in the parish of Mortimer. Originally built during the first century AD, it was refurbished in the third century when the main arena was defined with a flint and brown ironstone retaining wall still visible today. It is possible that up to 9000 people gathered at any one time to witness gladiatorial spectacles at Silchester.

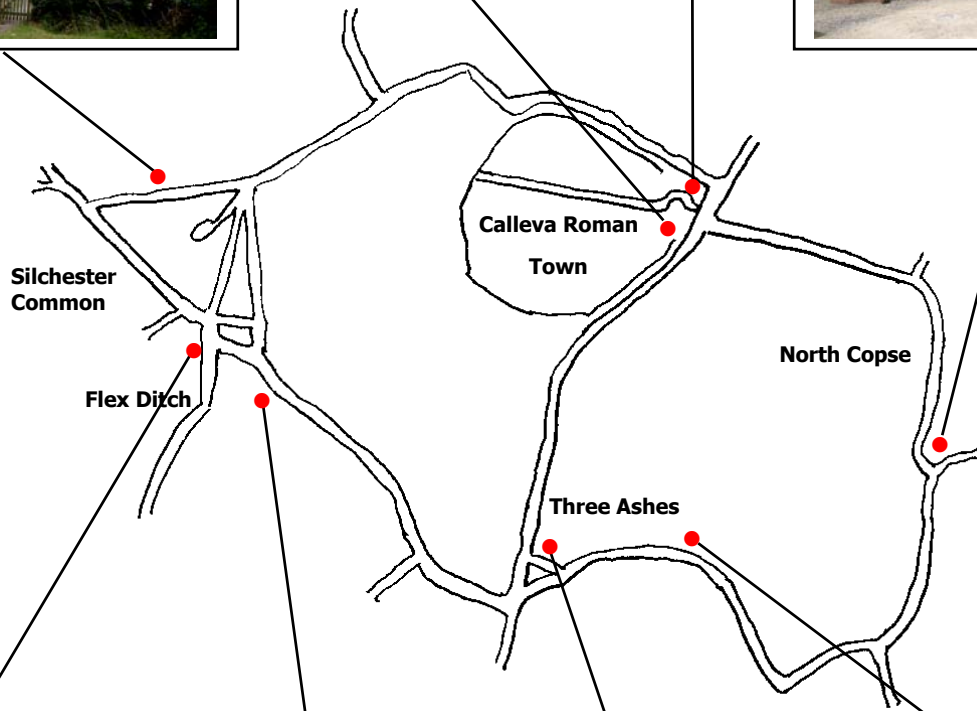
The course (and cause) of the town's decline and abandonment is difficult to trace but seems not to have been in full swing until after the end of the fifth century.

Whatever the cause of its demise, Calleva Atrebatum is an internationally significant site precisely because it has not been overrun. For the past 10 years one of the insulae (Latin for 'islands'), a square of buildings within the old town - number IX - has been the subject of an increasingly detailed and deep scientific excavation, conducted by Professor Fulford of the University of Reading.

### Later history

Although of poor quality soil, the heathland could be cleared easily and a dwelling built on it for free if done quickly. This practice ended in 1828, when the first Duke of Wellington bought Silchester from his brother-in-law, the Earl of Longford. The only lasting evidence of the early manorial influence is the 12<sup>th</sup> century church and the moated site on the east side of the parish dating from the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

The Duke of Wellington, residing in the adjacent village of Stratfield Saye, bought the Manor of Silchester in 1828. At that time, the majority of the villagers lived in cottages or rough shacks on, or around, the common, paying rent to The Duke or Rector Coles. The present Duke of Wellington sold the Manor of Silchester to a property company who sold it to Lillyheath Properties. When a scheme to sell off the Roman site in small plots failed, the land was put back on the market. In 1972 John Cook bought the farmland and Silchester Common, which he gave to the Parish, while Hampshire County Council (with English Heritage's help) bought the site of the Roman town.



**Some Characteristic Buildings within the Settlement**



## The settlement

### Shape of the Settlement

The parish of Silchester is characterised by several pockets of development. Although a wide variety of building styles, sizes and densities exist within the village, each pocket of development (broadly speaking) is characterised by its own distinctive style.

Most of the population of Silchester lives in the fairly recent housing development (erected in the late 1960s and 1970s). This is in the heart of the village but is shielded from general view because none of the houses in this development front on to any of the main roads through the village. The largest pocket of development is composed of the two centres of the Conservation Area. The central Conservation area adjoins the modern development but remains distinctly separate. The second Conservation area is the oldest part of the village known as the Pound or Three Ashes and is in the south of the parish. On the north side of the playing field is another distinct area set around School Lane and Kings Road. There are a number of residential properties and farms scattered throughout the rest of the parish, and the intervening area is either farmland or Silchester Common.

The edge of the development in the village is generally well defined, changing directly from agricultural to residential use. However, the rural character of the roads, lined with hedges and soft verges, gives an impression that the countryside penetrates into the village. The landscape is shaped by its agricultural past. This is covered in detail in BDBC's Countryside Design Summary.

Generally, any developments that have taken place over the last 50 years have been integrated into the overall character of the village and are not regarded as being intrusive. There are some notable exceptions where buildings that are out of character with the locality have been built in recent years.

Although Silchester shows an irregular distribution of dwellings, many interesting visual relationships have been established over the years. There is an informal mix of styles within the village within each specific area. This topic is discussed in more detail in the "Buildings" section.

### Open Spaces

There are significant amounts of open spaces within the core of the village and even in the more modern developments wide roads and open fronted gardens give a feeling of spaciousness. Much of these open spaces are common land. The roads into the centre of the village are either tree-lined or lined with hedgerows

Approaching the village from most directions you drive first through a tunnel of trees that then opens into a clear view of the playing fields.

Much of the open space in the village is Silchester Common.

Consequently there is a strong sense of being in the countryside everywhere in the village. Open spaces within Silchester add significantly to the feel of the village and allow a peaceful and tranquil atmosphere to be retained. This is particularly evident when we look at the playing fields, Tinkers Square and Silchester Common. The section called 'Treasured Views' expands on this theme.

### Gardens

Some of the village's gardens are opened annually to the public: for example, The Old House, West Silchester Hall and Old Meadows have all opened their garden gates. Many other homes in the village have gardens that provide areas of wildlife habitat, levels of inaccessibility and unusual shapes, none of which are found in typical suburban gardens. This fact serves to emphasise the essentially rural nature of Silchester and the rural manner of life lived by many of its residents.

### Lighting

Pollution is normally thought of as being to do with the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink or the land that we build our houses on. But, as anyone who has seen a picture of the earth taken from space has been able to observe, our cities and towns are devouring huge quantities of power simply by lighting themselves up. From the right vantage point around the village, it is easy enough to see the orange glow above the horizon that emanates from both Reading and Basingstoke. Part of the charm of the countryside that now has an even more powerful conservation message is the lack of extraneous and unnecessary lighting.

Silchester neither needs nor wants street lighting. Normal security measures when walking about late in the village are sufficient to ensure personal safety. The addition of extra lights would not significantly change anything apart from the amount of unnecessary light around.

Security lighting on private and commercial properties is even more noticeable in a parish like Silchester where street lighting is at a minimum. The light pollution that security lighting causes is in itself a big problem.

However, the deterrence of intruders that is the obvious motive behind such installations makes it a difficult issue to tackle. Guidance about such installations should cover the intensity and duration of any light that is activated by movement. No lights should be left on all night.

### Planning Guidance

- *Lighting in the Countryside: Towards Good Practice*. This Guide, published in July 1997 covers all forms of lighting, including lighting for security, sports facilities, commerce, retail, agriculture and mineral extraction; lighting of buildings, villages and residential development; and lighting of rural roads, junctions, services and parking areas. Its key objectives are to identify good practice in the planning and design of lighting in rural areas, and to advise on how it can be achieved, using case study examples.

**Some Buildings from the late C20th**





## The surrounding area

### Farmed Land

The following text is quoted from the BDBC Countryside Design Summary, passed as supplementary planning guidance in 2002: "The farmland [in this area] is mostly pasture or arable, with numerous paddocks and stud farms in the west of the area. Gravel in the north has given rise to heath soils. Extensive areas of coniferous woodland and heath-associated vegetation are found around Highclere and Burghclere in the north-west, and Silchester in the north-east. Silver Birch, Scots Pine and Oak are the dominant tree species in these areas. Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Holly, Alder Buckthorn and Gorse are typically found on the heath soils."

"Distinctive parkland landscapes are found at Highclere (Grade I), The Vyne (Grade II), Beaurepaire Park and Ewhurst Park. The roads are relatively straight and direct within the coniferous plantations around Silchester. Elsewhere, narrow winding lanes, many of which follow the south-north running valleys, connect the scattered settlements. There is a dense network of public paths across the area."

### Land usage

**Grazing.** A small herd of steers grazes freely on Silchester Common, as well as in Lord's Wood and Pamber Forest. The 17-strong group, (originally introduced in 2001) is made up of purebred Dexters. These are among the smallest cattle breeds in the world and are most often black, although some are red-brown. They are solid and compact with a life expectation of about 20 years. Dexters are good browsers having been bred to live on low-quality vegetation and to forage for their own food. These attributes were considered to be crucial when deciding whether or not to re-introduce grazing stock on to the common land within the parish of Silchester. It represented the most cost-effective means of maintaining heathland and limiting tree growth. An additional bonus is that the "varying grazing pressure" creates a diversity of habitats that include open pool margins, gorse stands, short grasslands and bushy heather. This in turn helps to support the widest possible spectrum of heathland species (see the Wildlife section for more details).

**Managed woodland.** Villagers make recreational use of the managed woodland within the parish for the purposes (amongst others) of dog-walking, rambling, horse-riding, bird- and butterfly-watching and jogging. These small woodlands supplement the areas of common land also used for these purposes. Englefield Woods adjoining the parish to its north western boundary is a much larger and commercially managed woodland. It provides all of the same amenities available in the parish, but in addition is also a buffer zone against the possibility of further development from a north-westerly direction.

### Changes in land use

If you look around the parish now and try to compare what you see with what you would have seen 100 years ago, much would seem the same. The most obvious difference is evident in the houses built in the last 50 years in what we have described as 'the heart of the village'. But there is another more subtle change. Most of the parish is farmland and this is characterised architecturally by a series of nice old farmhouses particularly in the southern portion. Tour around this area and you will see (among others) Brook, Park, Clappers, Dicker's, Silchester, Byes, Haines and Halls farmhouses. These buildings are (in general) no longer the focus of individual farming enterprises. One or two carry on rural activities such as livery stabling but most are used solely as residential dwellings. The farming itself is still carried on, but is usually carried out by farming contractors.

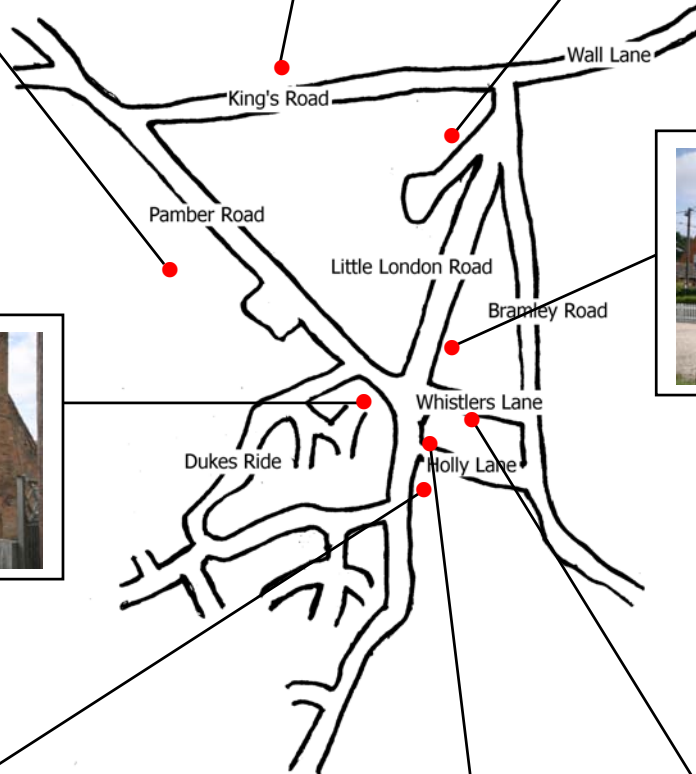
### Hedges and Verges

Individual hedgerows were not included in the Conservation Area Appraisal plan. However, their contribution to the character of the village should not be underestimated and their significance can be judged from the many photographs in this VDS showing the various hedgerows currently to be seen throughout the parish.

In addition, the village presents an attractive open planned nature as far as its estate areas are concerned. Even though the trees and hedges that were planted when the estates were built have now matured, the essential openness has been preserved.

### Planning Guidance

- Silchester is a countryside village working hard to maintain the open nature and feeling that is everywhere evident. Villagers want to avoid the feeling of being overcrowded and are particularly anxious to ensure that encroachment does not spread eastward from the Tadley and Pamber Heath direction.



**Some Buildings from the C19th and earlier**



## Conservation Areas

### Introduction

In 1992 BDBC first designated a Conservation Area in the village of Silchester to recognise the special architectural and historic interest of the village. The Conservation Area Appraisal document was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by BDBC on 17 July 2003 and complements the policies in the Borough Local plan (1996-2011) which was adopted on 17 July 2006. The Appraisal document arose from consultation between BDBC, the Parish Council and local village groups.

The factors that were considered before the Conservation Area was designated included the village's historic development, the contribution of individual or groups of buildings to the street scene, the spaces that surround them, and the relationships of the built environment with the landscape.

The Conservation Area is made up of two separate and distinctive parts: the Village Centre and The Pound. There are 11 buildings included on the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic interest, as being of local or regional importance (Grade II). The listed buildings represent a variety of building types, mainly dating from the 17th to 19th Centuries, and are dispersed throughout the village. They are often located at prominent positions within the area and therefore make a significant contribution to the special qualities of the Conservation Area.

In addition to the listed buildings, there are also many unlisted buildings of particular individual or group value, which are indicated on the plan as notable.

The main village is essentially residential and intimate in character, with an informal arrangement of buildings around narrow lanes and the common. The lanes link together small pockets of spaces often defined by key buildings. The Pound is also residential but of more rural appearance than the main village.

### Area 1: Significant Buildings in The Village Centre

**Culhams Farmhouse** (Grade II) built in 1847, is a house of status and is almost hidden by late 20th Century houses built on the adjacent land. Its dominant chimneystacks and steep slate roof can be glimpsed from along Little London Road.

**Silchester House** is in Holly Lane, set back from the road in extensive grounds. This listed building dates from about 1840 and is a large and intricate building of early Victorian Gothic style, reflecting the wealth of this area in the middle of the 19th Century. The building is characterised by its strong gables and the interesting roof slopes with sets of highly ornate chimney pots. The outbuildings adjoining the House are also of merit - the clocktower to the building adjoining the western end of the house is a prominent feature that can be viewed along Holly Lane as it curves around the house.

Opposite the common, **Vine Cottage** is an early 19th Century, two storey brick building with prominent catslide at the rear. Across the road on the same side of the common, **The Old Stores** on the corner of Whistlers Lane, dates from the 18th Century. Its vernacular and polite symmetrical front elevation and hipped tile roof are prominent from across the common and help define the space between it and the public house opposite.

There are also a number of non-listed buildings that have individual architectural merit. **Romans Hotel**, is a large, imposing 'Arts and Crafts' building, designed by Norman Evill, a London architect and pupil of Sir Edwin Lutyens, that was constructed in the early part of the 20th Century. This distinctive building occupies a large semi-public space off Little London Road. Just to the south can be glimpsed a long brick-built barn with slate roof that lies between the modern **Brookfields** and **Prospect House**. This offers a reminder of the predominantly rural character of the area.

**Woodrow** is of an unusual form as the original 19th Century building has been extended to the north. This brick-fronted and clay-tiled building is set within a mature tree belt. The **Village Hall** has a dominant form, with its tall and steep pitched roof slopes and tile-hung gable-end facing the common. The former **Forge Cottages** off Pamber Road are an important terrace of brick construction and predominantly slate roofs that screen views of more modern development behind. In doing so, the terrace retains the character of vernacular buildings around the edge of the common.

### Area 2: Significant Buildings in The Pound

**Pound House** stands slightly apart to the western end of the hamlet, set within an extensive garden that stretches down to Silchester Brook to the south. It has a symmetrical and polite elevation and appears to have been intended to be set apart from the main group of buildings.

**Pound Cottage** is a long, rendered brick building framed by two later cross wings extending forward of the original building line. The more recent adjoining garage building is of complementary scale and has a small, but prominent clocktower that can be seen along Church Lane. **Robin's Roost** is a one and a half storey cottage, built of brick with thatched roof and 'eyebrow' dormers. The thatched garage building to the rear hides the cottage from view, but contributes to the rural character of the area. The stable block in the grounds of the **Old Coach House** helps define a small, intimate space behind.

### Planning Guidance

This can be found in the Conservation Area Planning Guidance adopted by BDBC in 1992

**Some Buildings from the late C19th and early C20th**





## Buildings

### Types of buildings and materials

#### Styles

Silchester has developed and grown over a long period of time and the resultant styles of buildings in and around the village emphasise this growth. However the growth in styles is not ad hoc and there is a definite pattern of development as sections of the village have undergone periods of growth followed by stability.

In the 'old' village, generally defined by the two Conservation areas, there is a high proportion of timber and thatch and local brick and slate-roofed buildings. In the northern section around School Lane and Kings Road houses are predominantly built of local brick with slate roofs. In the 'modern' estates around Dukes Ride and Hydes Platt, the buildings are typically 1960s and 1970s of imported brick or rendered brick with tile roofs.

Within these distinct areas there are other individual styles but they tend to be 'infill' developments and often are visually obtrusive and would not meet recent planning guidance.

#### House Sizes

Silchester has a wide range of house sizes from very small cottages to mansion houses and it is this variety that is part of the attraction of the village. There is a tendency for recent developments to follow the typical South East standard four bedroom detached type. Only two recent developments have smaller houses, one of which is an estate of affordable housing that lacks the variety seen elsewhere in the village.

For the village to maintain its essential character, buildings of different sizes should be part of the future planning. In addition small houses are more affordable and therefore encourage younger people to either remain in or join the village community.

#### House Extensions

As families increase in size and because Silchester is a popular village for families, there is a tendency for houses to be extended. Some types of houses (such as those in the 1970's estate around Dukes Ride) are suitable for extension, whilst for others any sideways or front extensions can distort and seriously affect the streetscape.

When house extensions are permitted, the building materials should match those used for the original house and the extension should be in keeping with the size of the original house.

### Particular visual aspects

Many distinctive buildings within the Parish are illustrated in the map pages of this document.

### Other man made aspects

A raised transformer supported on large telegraph poles dominates the centre of the village. This is placed opposite the pub and between two notable buildings, and this together with the associated lines from the transformer is ugly and eye-catching. Similar visual pollution should be avoided if at all possible in the future.

Villagers are keen to maintain the footpaths in a usable state and this concern is enforced by the presence of a Footpaths Officer. The Silchester Parish Council promotes the awareness, use and maintenance of all footpaths in the parish and these are regularly marked. To this end a footpath map called "Exploring Silchester" (available through the Silchester Parish Council) was produced in 2006.

### Planning Guidance

- All developments should respect the separate definable areas within the village
- New buildings should be of similar proportions and construction to houses in the vicinity
- Buildings should reflect design styles and features such as doors, windows and roofs of other houses in the vicinity
- Developments should retain existing mature trees and other natural features in order to maintain the country aspect of the village
- Developments should employ boundaries of a similar style to other plots in the vicinity including where appropriate open front gardens
- Future development should minimise the use of overhead power lines
- Developments, 'infill' building and house extensions should be in keeping with the surrounding area taking account of the style and type of buildings within that particular part of the village
- New developments should have a suitable variety of building sizes with a suitable number of small houses
- For house extensions the effect on the streetscape needs to be taken into account. Matching building materials should be used



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## Important aspects of the village

### Silchester Common

A large part of Silchester Common (together with Lord's Wood and Upper and Lower Inham's Copse – all three of which are privately owned) was declared a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1951 due to its diversity of flora and fauna. It is in continual use by many local people for a variety of different activities - walking, jogging, nature rambling, exercising dogs and wide games (an old-fashioned term for kids enjoying themselves outdoors!). It has become an important amenity. It provides a natural break between Silchester on the one hand and the larger village of Pamber Heath and the nearby town of Tadley on the other.

Silchester Common itself is one of a few surviving tracts of heathland in the Thames Valley region of North Hampshire. It is owned and looked after by the Silchester Parish Council. Heathland is an internationally endangered habitat. Approximately 90% of the heathland in North Hampshire existing at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century has now been destroyed. The area covered by BDBC has lost 98% of its former heaths and currently half of the remaining 160 hectares is now severely degraded by abuse or neglect. In an attempt to recover from this position, a management committee of local people and specialist advisors has been formed to ensure that a programme of work required to restore the common is carried out. This is now under way and new areas of heathland are currently being reclaimed.

The heathland areas of Silchester Common are particularly important, forming a scarce habitat type that is regarded as the best example of calluna/erica/ulex heathland on the Tertiary deposits in the Thames Basin.

### Flex Ditch

At the foot of the short hill that leads down from the village centre southwards at a sharp right-hand bend, is the 'Flex Ditch', a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The ditch which is now well covered by mature vegetation, but visible from the pond alongside the main road, adjoins the line of a former Roman Road (the 'Portway') that crosses the main road at this point. The pond and ditch create an intimate space at the southern entrance to the Conservation Area, which is revealed beyond the bend in the road and up the hill. The tall chimneystacks on Culham's Farm are the visible sign of the area.

### Treasured Views

Walk the short path from the Silchester War Memorial and along the track to the Roman town walls. Emerging from the wooded canopy the town opens out before you over ancient pastureland towards St. Mary the Virgin Church, the parish church of Silchester. Walk southeast or north around the wall. Either route leads to views unparalleled elsewhere locally.

Go southeast and walk down past Rampier's Copse and scramble up onto the top of the 5 metre high eminence. Across the enclosed town area to the north you can see towards Reading for miles across open farmland studded with small swathes of ancient woods - in springtime the new greens have a hundred different shades but only a handful have ever been properly named.

Go north and you're soon walking along high on the wall with the new excavations to your right, where annually each summer a small 'Roman' town of archaeologists' tents emerges to house the new season's dig. On for a further half mile swinging round to the east and the walk reveals a view back across the town towards Basingstoke, equally as enchanting as the view from the opposite side. In the early summer as the grass starts to grow up, the wild flowers can be seen growing strongly in straight lines along what 1600 years ago may have been roadways through the Roman town. The town's history comes to life in front of your eyes.

Views across the playing fields and into Silchester from Pamber Heath and south down Little London Road are also particularly cherished by local residents and help to define the character of the village.

And finally, the view from the dry heath on the open upper plateau of Silchester Common overlooking the densely wooded wet, marshy valley areas that drain into the stream leading towards Pamber Forest; Silchester's unique character is derived as much from the Common as from any other single feature, even the Roman Town, some think. The banked, thickly covered sides of this valley provide shelter for the annual arrival of the nightjars from Africa. Gorse, heather, furze and other plants that thrive in the sandy soils, give way on the western side to a mixed woodland that contains many traditional English woodland species, oak, beech, ash and birch. With the wind in the right direction, (so that the road sounds drift off away from hearing), this private-seeming area of common land in the late summer evenings is a place of profound peacefulness and tranquillity.

### Planning Guidance

- All developments must be reviewed to ensure they do not result in encroachment onto Silchester Common
- The environmental impact of any new developments, particularly on drainage or potential pollution must be carefully assessed to prevent damage to the SSSI
- Care should be taken that any developments do not impinge on the unspoilt nature of any Iron Age, Roman or historically significant remains from any other period
- Any developments that impact on the scenic views identified in this and the Conservation Area Appraisal should ensure that they retain the overall visual impression

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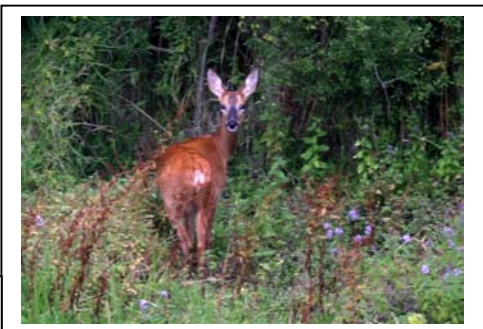
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## Wildlife

### Birds

Bird species that particularly benefited from the reclamation work carried out on Silchester Common (see above) are the nightjars, Dartford warblers and woodlarks. Woodlarks are a particularly endangered species with a national count of some 1500 pairs in the whole of the United Kingdom. These birds have been seen during 2005 and 2006 on our Common, and of these Dartford warblers are known to breed there.

Although not within the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) for heathland, Silchester Common displays many of the same characteristics, and supports many of the same species, particularly the birds. The SPA is protected under the European Union's 1979 birds directive, translated into English law as the Habitats Regulations of 1994. This advises that the special characteristics of the vanishing heathland are best protected in Europe by enforcing a ban on any new developments within a 400-metre building exclusion zone from the heathland boundary.

Of the larger species to be seen regularly there are frequent visits by buzzards all over the parish, the occasional red kite, frequent tawny owls and less frequent but more than welcome visits by barn owls.

In the summer we are visited by many familiar species such as the cuckoo and yellowhammer. Less well known but equally as frequent we also see willow warbler, chiffchaff, wheatear and blackcap.

All year round we are fortunate to find such species as skylark, green, great spotted and lesser-spotted woodpeckers, nuthatches, song and mistle thrushes, kestrel, bullfinch, jackdaw, jay and magpie, pheasant and partridge.

### Deer

A typical feature of both woods and the farmland within the parish is the presence of deer. The two species encountered most frequently are the native roe deer and the muntjac that arrived as an exotic escapee from collections brought from overseas. They can be seen all the year round, although the roe deer are easier to see, being larger than their introduced cousins, and also prone to foraging in family groups.

### Other mammals

Badgers and foxes are to be encountered by the observant, especially around about the hours of dusk and dawn. There has been no hunting activity over the land in the recent past, and with the new legislation in place against foxhunting with hounds this is likely to continue to be the case. Rabbits are widespread and the occasional hare can be seen on the open ploughed farmland throughout the year.

### Reptiles

Silchester Common is home to four of the six native species of reptile, which provides an ideal habitat for them. They are the common lizard, slow worm, grass snake and adder.

### Butterflies

Although not within the parish, Pamber Forest is well known for its butterflies. A project to re-create the ideal conditions for the rare small pearl-bordered fritillary is finally producing results after 13 years. The effectiveness of this project is in part due to the Forest's proximity to other areas such as Silchester Common and Upper Inham's Copse, both within the parish, which are also perfect breeding sites for this (and many other) butterfly species.

Other unusual butterflies breeding in this area include the silver-washed fritillary, purple emperor, purple hairstreak and white admiral.

### Trees

The woodland throughout the copses and other wooded areas to the south of the village centre constitutes one of its most distinctive features.

There are a number of mature trees of note in the village, including a maturing walnut to the rear of the Calleva Arms, a fine copper beech and a cedar of Lebanon, both in the grounds of Silchester House and a notable hedgerow of hollies along Bramley Road.

There are also a number of a rarer species, in particular the wild service tree that can be found in the local woodland.

### Planning Guidance

- Any new agricultural buildings should be carefully sited to minimise their impact on the wider landscape
- Note that new development is unlikely to encroach on the common because of the legislation protecting SSSIs



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## Living with the motor car

### Traffic Calming

Traffic calming is very important to the village but it is widely felt that it should not be intrusive. So, for example, the technique of restricting the carriageway to one lane and introducing traffic priority to oncoming vehicles as has been brought in to Little London near 'The Plough' would not be universally welcomed in Silchester.

Some natural calming such as the bends around Flex ditch help to reduce speeds, but the straight sections (maybe from old Roman roads) tend to encourage traffic to travel too fast. However, to counteract this tendency, the removal of white lines from the middle of some roads within the parish has had partial success in encouraging slower driving speeds.

Another possible improvement within Silchester could be made by changing the speed limit throughout the village from 40 down to 30mph. Traffic calming continues to be a difficult issue, but residents are united in their request for a reduced speed limit.

### Street Furniture

Several of the views into the village and within the centre of village have already been spoilt by an excessive number of road traffic and other signs.

There is a need to minimise street furniture wherever and whenever possible. This should be done, of course, without compromising the safety of those who seldom travel through Silchester and may need extra assistance to navigate hidden entrances and sharp bends safely. Unfortunately traffic-calming measures are usually associated with increased signage.

Signage could be minimised if the whole village was a 30 mph area - all that would be needed would be the signs at the entrance to the area

Large road direction signs in a village environment are unnecessary and, in the light of recent moves to provide traffic calming, smaller, traditional finger post signs can act to slow traffic at junctions.

Large brown 'tourist signs' are ugly and out-of-keeping in the village environment because of colour impact and disproportionate size. Such signs are designed for major roads and are not appropriate for villages.

### Parking

Within the parish next to the playing field, we are fortunate to have a large free car park, provided by the Silchester Parish Council, enabling anyone who visits the village for sporting or other reasons to park safely close to their destination. This car park should also be used by all those parents picking up or collecting children from the Silchester Primary School. This is to avoid danger and congestion on the very narrow School Lane access road.

There is also a large car park near Calleva Atrebatum, although local police advise extreme care when using this facility because it is regularly targeted by car thieves. It is not thought cost-effective to have even a part-time car park attendant available to deter would-be thieves.

The increase in private car use has led to an increase in vehicles parked outside housing boundaries, often parking illegally on Common Land. New developments should be planned to permit adequate parking on-site as well as allowing access for service vehicles .

### Heavy & large Vehicles

The entrance to the village from the south (along the Little London Road) has a weight limit of 7.5 tonnes except for access. However the northern part along Kings Road does not have a limit and heavy vehicles use the road as a 'short cut' to travel from Tadley to the M4 and Reading. This is exacerbated by the number of haulage companies that operate out of Tadley. Officially the HCC has a voluntary code for such vehicles to use Welshman's Road; a route that has very few houses. A weight limit would enforce this route and reduce the danger to pedestrians, damage to road verges and inadvertent road widening. This problem will increase with the development of business units at Valentine's Wood.

### Planning Guidance

- Adequate parking should be provided within the boundaries of each new property
- New developments should ensure adequate vehicular access arrangements both for residents and for service vehicles such as refuse collection
- Where possible any additional signs should replace existing signage. Traditional wooden signposts are preferred to their modern equivalent. Street furniture should be minimised. Large signs and tourist 'brown' signs should be replaced by those more suited to a village environment
- HCC should be encouraged to apply their Good Practice Guidance for Villages
- New developments should be encouraged to minimise high-voltage security lighting
- Traffic calming is to be encouraged within the limits outlined above but the villagers would prefer to continue to press for a 30mph speed limit throughout the whole village
- An extension of the village weight limit to the northern part would reduce road damage and improve road safety for pedestrians
- HCC Highways Authority has developed a good practice document "Design Guidance for Special Areas", which was complemented in 2002 with guidance called "Use of Traditional Materials". HCC should be encouraged to utilise this guidance in future within the parish of Silchester



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## Conclusions

Although the central part of Silchester is compact, the village has a diverse and widespread pattern of settlements and house styles. Each area has developed at its own pace and ultimately this has resulted in groups of individual building methods and materials ranging from timber and thatch; through timber, brick and tile; to brick and slate and finally to the modern use of brick, render and tiling.

Even though this slow development has resulted in a wide mix of building styles, it is very important to note that the wrong building type in the wrong place has considerable negative impact. Future development and planning should take account of the historical context of each specific area within the village and re-enforce the particular qualities of each area through the use of matching or complementary building styles and suitable use of open space where appropriate.

A significant proportion of the village is designated a Conservation Area, however most of this Area is closely joined to the remainder of the village and this should be taken into account in assessing planning in the parts of the village outside of the Conservation Area.

The village is closely allied to the surrounding countryside, its own Common and the historical town of Calleva Atrebatum. There is an overwhelming wish from within the community to safeguard the rural and village landscape, patterns, ecology and traditions.

Key points taken from the various village meetings to discuss this Village Design Statement can be summarised as follows:

- Any development should be in keeping with and sensitive to the essence of Silchester. Development should reflect the essential character of the locality, established by size, scale, density and design of the surrounding buildings. Traditionally used materials should be incorporated into new developments where appropriate.
- Protection and maintenance of the existing landscape is a vital element in future planning. Any new development should not prejudice the coherent and contiguous habitat for wildlife around the village
- Great effort should be made to maintain historical features and aspects. For example, the close juxtaposition of Listed and Notable buildings should be uncompromised by out-of-character new buildings
- Developments should have similar boundaries in style and size to other plots in the vicinity including, where appropriate, open front gardens
- Agricultural buildings should take account of the comments in this VDS, particularly with respect to the impact on the wider landscape
- Traffic calming and vehicle weight restrictions are to be encouraged although the general consensus is that a 30 mph speed limit throughout the whole village is preferred
- The rural character and charm of the country lanes should be protected and road signs strictly limited to those that are absolutely necessary
- Changes to country lanes, lakes and ponds, footpaths and other rights of way should be considered only in very rare circumstances. Mature hedgerows, trees and other plants should be preserved. No development should be permitted on Silchester Common or the Roman Site
- There is a wish for the core of the village to remain free from street lighting. Reduced light pollution should be encouraged throughout the village. Low level security lighting should be specified in place of high power arc lighting



Spring



Summer



Villager attending a Public VDS Event

Autumn



Winter



Night comes over Silchester



## Sources and References

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8. The magazine of the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife - Winter 2005
9. The Hampshire & IOW page of the Butterfly Conservation website
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## Timetable of Public VDS Events

Throughout the development of the Silchester Village Design Statement, Silchester villagers were given the opportunity to provide comments, advice and views. This included public meetings, articles in the parish magazine, a mail shot to all villagers, a school project and a Silchester VDS display stand at various village events. Details of these are provided below. Related documentary evidence is available on request

June 2002	Mailing to every Silchester household inviting them to the first VDS Meeting
June 2002	Article in parish magazine providing background to VDS
16 July 2002	Public meeting to explain VDS and invite comments
15 November 2002	Display stand and presentation at Silchester Village Hall, cheese and wine evening
23 November 2002	Display stand at Silchester school craft fair
7 December 2002	Display stand at Silchester Christmas Dance
Spring 2003	Silchester School project on village design issues
7 June 2003	Display stand with initial draft document at Silchester Church fete
Periodically during 2004-2006	Whilst editing work was progressing, regular presentations were made to the Open sessions at Parish Council Meetings
December 2006	Article in Parish Magazine inviting all villagers to the meeting of the Parish Council in January 2007 to review the final draft of the VDS



## Photographs and Maps

<a href="#">Front and Back Covers - Top</a>	Part of Silchester Roman Wall
<a href="#">Front and Back Covers - Bottom</a>	Part of Silchester Common
<a href="#">Front Cover - Centre</a>	Silchester Village Millennium Sign
<a href="#">Back Cover - Centre</a>	Silchester Roman Horse pendant - from the front of the 2006 Dig T-shirt
<a href="#">Inside Front Cover</a>	Map of the Silchester Parish reproduced by kind permission of the Ordnance Survey
<a href="#">Inside Back Cover</a>	Work produced by pupils at Silchester Primary School as specific contributions to the VDS
<a href="#">Opposite Table of Contents - Top</a>	Map of Silchester showing the density of dwellings in the main part of the village.
<a href="#">Opposite Table of Contents - Bottom</a>	Ordnance Survey map of Silchester showing the location within the Parish of the detailed map above
<a href="#">Opposite Page 1</a>	1. Pond on Silchester Common - 2. Part of Silchester Roman Wall - 3. Aerial view of Silchester Common - 4. Aerial view of the centre of Silchester village - 5. The Impstone - 6. Silchester Roman amphitheatre - 7. 5-bar gate near the Roman wall
<a href="#">Opposite Page 2</a>	1. Insula No. IX 2006 Dig - 2. The Dig 'Village' 2006 - 3. St. Mary's Parish Church - 4. Detail of a course of the Roman wall - 5. The North Gate through the Roman wall - 6. Latter-day Romans, 2006 - 7. Sifting through the 2006 Dig findings
<a href="#">Opposite Page 3, 4, 5 and 6</a>	Photographs of individual houses within Silchester. The locations are indicated by a red dot, but the house names are not specified.
<a href="#">Opposite Page 7</a>	1. Aerial view of Silchester Common - 2. Silchester common near Lord's Wood - 3. Roman wall looking towards St. Mary's church- 4. Silchester common - 5. Wooded footpath around the Roman wall - 6. Roman wall - 7. Stubble field near The Pound 8. Gate onto Silchester common – 9. Depth marker near ford at Clapper's Farm
<a href="#">Opposite Page 8</a>	1. Red admiral - 2. Buzzards - 3. Humming-bird hawk moth- 4. Silver-washed fritillary - 5. Yellow flags - 6. Roe deer - 7. Common pheasant
<a href="#">Opposite Page 9</a>	1. Unruly signage at the junction of Little London Road and King's Road - 2. Looking down Little London Road to the Calleva Arms - 3. Silchester village free car park (next to the playing fields) - 4. A view of Church Lane next to the Roman wall – 5. Looking from the Calleva Arms; the opposite view to picture 2 - 6. Flex Ditch natural traffic calming to the south of the village - 7. Difficult junction on the lane down to Clapper's Farm
<a href="#">Opposite Page 10</a>	Stabled horse at Clapper's Farm - 2. Cattle near the Roman wall - 3. Leading a corn trailer in the southeast of the parish - 4. Small orchard near The Pound - 5. Bust shelter opposite The Calleva Arms - 6. Footpath leading towards Mortimer West End - 7. Part of Silchester Roman wall
<a href="#">Photo Credits</a>	All photographs were taken by Colin Hyde or Paul Norris except the aerial photographs and that of the Public VDS Event between pages 10-11 that were provided by the kind permission of Peter Hughes
<a href="#">Photo Locations</a>	All photographs were taken within the parish of Silchester

## ROMAN CALLEVA ATREBATUM

**!!SILCHESTER!!**  
*Silchester is surrounded by the Roman Wall,  
 It has a club room and a village hall.  
 A hotel, which has a swimming pool,  
 And a village school.*

*A lovely common were you can walk,  
 A pub where you can sit and talk.  
 There are football and cricket pitches,  
 Silchester Players sometimes have people in  
 stitches.*

*We have a very old Church.  
 Archaeologists come to search,  
 For artefacts that tell us of the past,  
 Where Romans used to march.*

*Silchester house has fireworks,  
 Where everyone goes to enjoy the loud bangs and  
 noises.*

*The garden is open in summer  
 For visitors to enjoy at their leisure.*

*A warm welcome awaits you,  
 From all the people there,  
 We all agree, as you can see.....*

**!THAT SILCHESTER IS THE BEST PLACE TO  
 LIVE!**

*By Jade Saunders*

Silchester is a small, peaceful Roman village situated in an area from which it is easy to commute to the major towns and cities. There is a regular bus service to Reading, Basingstoke and Tadley and trains run from Mortimer and Bramley to places further afield.

The village has many facilities such as a: Primary school, pub, village hall, museum, churches, hotel, leisure centre and much more.

There are lots of activities for both children and adults to take part in. Pantomimes and youth clubs are available for children, while adults can attend the yearly quiz night and theatre productions.

You can walk around our historical feature, the Roman wall, with plaques on the way to tell you about the wall and the Romans. No visit is complete without a trip to the museum and the amphitheatre!

Each year the village house is opened to the public for a spectacular display of fireworks.

*So all in all Silchester is the best place to live and fun for the whole family!*

By Rebecca Ridout  
 Age 10  
 Silchester Primary C. of E. School



### Silchester

We have lots of clubs and teams  
 Like cricket and football,  
 We play upon the village green  
 Which is near Silchester School.

We get good grades  
 In our hardest tests,  
 We revise so hard  
 And try our best.

The Romans Hotel provides our leisure  
 With its gym, tennis court and pool,  
 A delightful feast awaits you there  
 From a roast dinner to an ice cream, cool!

A beautiful countryside surrounds the village  
 Enticing you to venture out and walk,  
 All paths end near to the Calleva Arms Pub  
 Where you can sit, have a drink and talk.

So from all of us here  
 You really should see,  
 Silchester will welcome you  
 Whoever you may be!

By Alison Prickett  
 Year 6 pupil  
 Silchester School

**S** is for Silchester, a great place to live.

**I** is for interesting artefacts of old.

**L** is for a lovely village all of the time.

**C** is for caring people in every house there is.

**H** is for happy as a place to stay.

**E** is for enormous fields we play on.

**S** is for the school and the smart pupils.

**T** is for the teachers working hard for us.

**E** is for everyone working as a team.

**R** is for the Roman wall with the paths along it.

**I** is for the imagination of the Silchester players.

**S** is for special like the pupils in our schools.

**G** is for gardens, open in the summer.

**R** is for restoring Roman things from soil.

**E** is for the enjoyable view everywhere you look.

**A** is for the amphitheatre where many Romans sat.

**T** is for treasure, hidden beneath our feet.

**!** So what are you waiting for?

**SILCHESTER IS GREAT!!**

By Edward Wells

