This mosaic is one of 13 found at the Roman town at Silchester. About 10 miles south-west of Reading, Silchester was excavated between 1890 and 1909 in an ambitious attempt to establish the complete plan of a Romano-British town. Many thousands of artefacts were discovered and deposited with Reading Museum.

This pavement has a geometric design of black and white chequers, within a border of red and grey lozenges on a white background. It measures about 1.5 metres square. It was found in a building near the south-east corner of the forum, which some archaeologists have interpreted as an early Christian church. The mosaic held a central position within a semicircular extension of the west wall, known as an apse. If the building was truly a church, it must have been built after the Edict of Toleration of the Christians of 313AD. However, some experts believe the style of the mosaic dates it to the previous century.

The original excavators in 1892 did not remove this mosaic from the site, perhaps because they did not want to disturb what they saw as a sacred building. Instead they filled the broken areas with cement. In 1961 the building was re-examined by Sir Ian Richmond and George Boon and the mosaic was lifted and stored by the Museum. The mosaic was conserved in 2000 and put on display for the first time alongside two other Silchester mosaics in the Atrium Gallery.

Reference