

*BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY
FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT*

**An Archaeological
Watching Brief: Wall
Hall, Wall, Staffordshire**

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Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
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by
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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit at Wall Hall, Wall, Staffordshire (SK 100 066) in March 1998. There is extensive evidence for archaeological activity in the surrounding area relating to a Romano-British military and civic settlement. Observations were made of all ground disturbance associated with the construction of a new garage at Wall Hall. Nothing of archaeological significance was identified.

INTRODUCTION

The following report describes the results of an archaeological watching brief at Wall Hall, Wall, Staffordshire (SK 100 066), carried out prior to the construction of a new garage (Figs 1 and 2). The work was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit and fulfilled criteria set by Lichfield District Council. The work was undertaken on behalf of Mr. P. Newcy.

There is extensive evidence of archaeological sites in the vicinity, including a number of cropmarked sites, relating to Romano-British military and civic settlement activity. Wall is identified as Letocetum, recorded in the Ravenna List, and from presently available evidence the Roman settlement spanned the 1st century to the 4th century. The settlement lies on Watling Street near to the junction with Ryknild Street and is arguably part of a chain of *burgi*. The central area of Letocetum is protected as S.A.M. Staffordshire No.15. Clearly the area is of high archaeological potential.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the archaeological work was to obtain an adequate record of any archaeological deposits or finds disturbed or exposed by work associated with the development.

METHODS STATEMENT

The foundation trench for the new structure was excavated by machine. Archaeological monitoring was undertaken during these below-ground excavations and all significant archaeological deposits were recorded.

Archaeological recording was undertaken using a continuous numbered context system and BUFAU pro-forma record cards. All identified deposits were photographed and a full drawn record at an appropriate scale was maintained.

RESULTS

The foundation trench, excavated within the area of interest (Fig. 2), was rectangular in shape, incomplete on the west side. The east side (back) was 11.5m. long, the north and south sides 6.5m. in length. The west side (front) extended in 2m. from each corner (Fig. 3). The trench was approximately 1m. wide and 1m. deep in all places.

The basic stratigraphy comprised of 0.4m. of topsoil overlying an orange/brown silty sand subsoil, 0.6m. in depth. Recorded underlying this subsoil, in various areas, was a very clean orange sand. Along the north side of the excavated trench, extending along part of the east side, were the remnants of modern building foundations consisting of eight courses of bricks laid on top of mortared stones. Underneath the mortared stones the orange/brown silty sand subsoil was again visible. The stratigraphy recorded is illustrated by sample sections (see Figs. 3A/B).

No archaeological features were identified. No finds were recovered.

DISCUSSION

Despite the extensive indications of archaeological activity in the vicinity of the new building, no indication of pre-Nineteenth century activity was identified during the watching brief.

It is possible that the deposits of topsoil and subsoil, in total a depth of 1m., are part of later landscaping and terracing. If this is the case then there is potential for archaeological features within this area at a greater depth. The recognised clean orange sand, visible in some areas, may be the original natural subsoil and further examination of this may reveal archaeological features.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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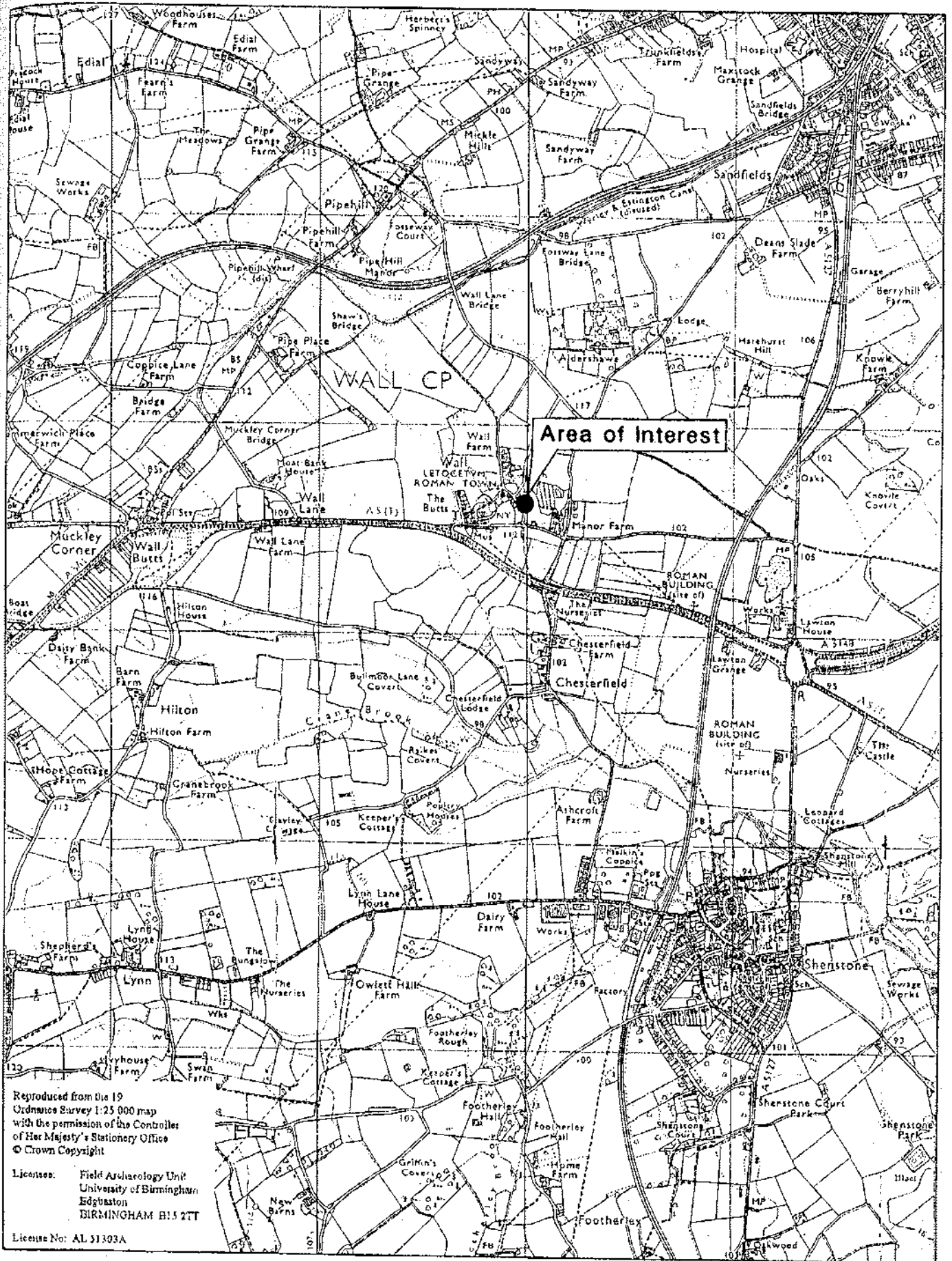


Fig. 1

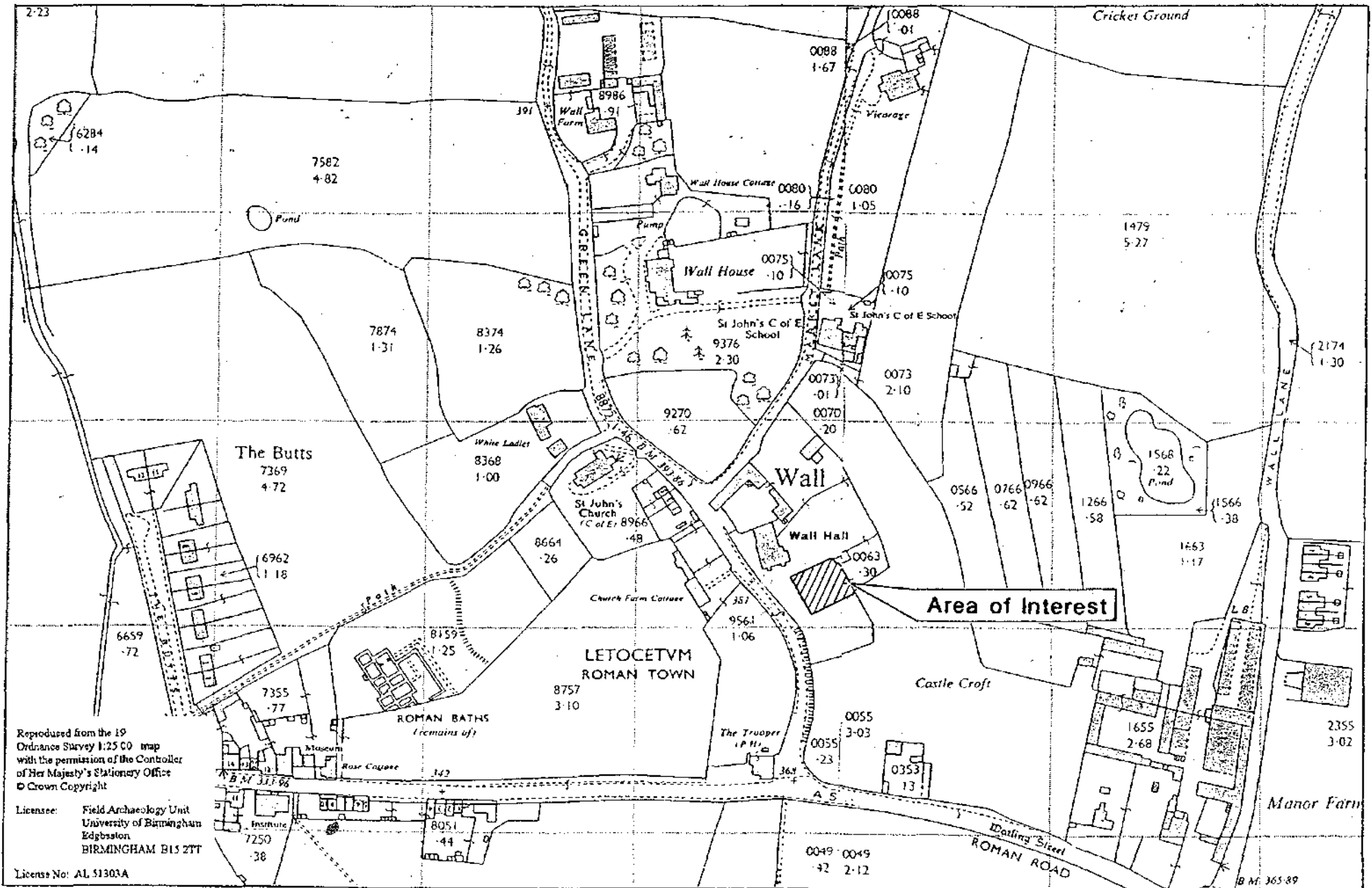


Fig.2

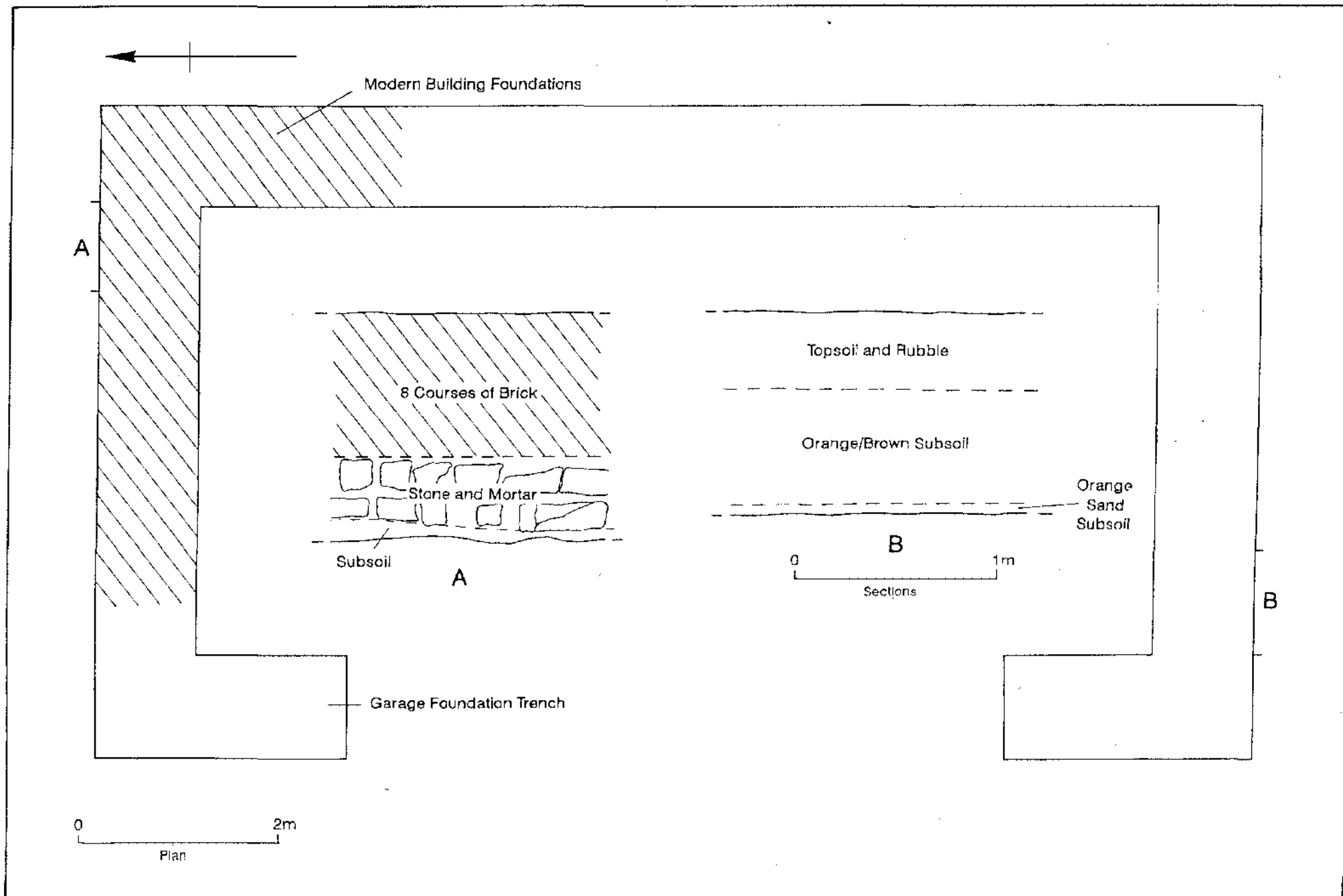


Fig.3