

**An archaeological watching brief at  
Shenfield Hall, Hall Lane,  
Shenfield, Essex**

**March 2002**

**on behalf of  
Mr P Jones, Shenfield Hall**

CAT project ref.: 02/3a  
ECC HAMP code: BWSH 02  
National Grid Reference: TQ 6050 9526  
Planning application number: BRW/0530/00



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**CAT Report 181**  
April 2002

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## 1 Summary

*Observations were made during an archaeological watching brief on the construction of a double garage and workshop at Shenfield Hall, Hall Lane, Shenfield, Essex. All the trenches cut only modern material and nothing of archaeological significance was observed.*

## 2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is the report on an archaeological watching brief carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on the 11th and 12th of March 2002 at Shenfield Hall, Hall Lane, Shenfield, Essex. The work was given planning permission under application number BRW/0530/00 with a condition for an archaeological watching brief. CAT provided a written scheme of investigation for the work which was approved by the Essex County Council Heritage Advice, Management and Promotion (ECC HAMP) section.
- 2.2 Shenfield is situated 1.5km north-east of Brentwood. Shenfield Hall is located on the northern edge of Shenfield at National Grid Reference TQ 6050 9526. The site is to the north-east of the main house and is currently used as a yard (Fig 1). The yard has a tarmac surface and is on a north-facing slope which has been terraced.
- 2.3 This report follows the standards set out in the IFA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (1999).

## 3 Archaeological background (Fig 1)

Shenfield Hall is situated in an area of archaeological interest which includes evidence of Roman, medieval and post-medieval activity. An archaeological evaluation by Mark Ingram of Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit to the east of the church in 1994 (Essex Heritage Conservation Record or EHCR no 20262) revealed two Roman features as well as unstratified Roman and medieval pottery (Ingram 1995). Roman brick, pottery and coins have also been recovered from fields to the north-east of the development site (EHCR 5485-5487). Shenfield Hall itself is probably of late 16th- or early 17th-century date and is thought to have been built on the site of an earlier medieval manor house (EHCR 5348-5349). The principal archaeological monument in the vicinity is St Mary's Church, which lies to the south of the site and dates from the 15th century (EHCR 5510-5514).

## 4 Aims and objectives

The aim of the watching brief was to identify and record any features of archaeological interest that were exposed during groundworks for the proposed development.

## 5 Methods

- 5.1 The fieldwork was carried out by professional archaeologist Laura Pooley of CAT. The footings for the new structure covered an area of 5.75m x 11.5m. Four foundation trenches (Trench or T1, T2, T3 and T4) were dug by contractors using a machine with a toothless ditching bucket and were 500mm wide and 1m-1.7m deep. Areas were cleaned by hand to ensure the visibility of archaeological deposits. Spoil heaps were checked for artefacts.
- 5.2 Individual records of layers and features were entered on CAT pro-forma record sheets.
- 5.3 A plan was drawn at a scale of 1:50 (Fig 2) and section drawings at a scale of 1:10 (Figs 3-4).
- 5.4 Colour photographs of the sections of the trenches were taken with a digital camera.
- 5.5 A metal detector was not used due to the abundance of modern metal in the spoil.
- 5.6 No finds were retrieved as there was only modern material from the trenches.

## 6 Results (Figs 2, 3 and 4)

All four foundation trenches (T1-T4) cut through the tarmac surface of the yard (Layer or L1) and its base of concrete, stone and modern brick (L2). These layers sealed L3, which was a mixed layer of dark brown and light brown silty clay containing modern brick and pieces of drain-pipe.

In the most easterly trench (T1), L3 overlay a dark brown sandy silty clay containing modern brick (L4). Natural light brown sandy silty clay was reached at between 1.2m and 1.3m below ground-level in this trench. L3 and L4 are modern material which was laid to level out the ground before the surfacing of the yard. A deep modern pit (F1) was exposed in the west-facing section of T1, cutting through L3 and L4. It was filled with modern brick, peg-tile, modern tin cans, metalwork and concrete (Section 1, Fig 3). This pit was also observed in both sections of the northern trench (T2).

In T3, the western trench, the section drawing shows the modern L1-L3 sitting on top of the natural silty clay which sloped down from south to north, thus demonstrating the levelling out of the slope (Section 2, Fig 4).

No finds or features of archaeological significance were revealed by the groundworks. As there were no intermediate deposits between natural ground and the modern deposits, it would appear that the area has been stripped in the past.

## 7 Discussion

The watching brief produced negative results. It appears that the yard area has been stripped in the past and then made up with modern material to level it out, as the ground-level north of the garden wall is much lower.

## 8 Archive deposition

- 8.1 A copy of this report and the full archive will be deposited at Chelmsford Museum within two months of completion of the report, and confirmed to ECC HAMP. All requirements for archive storage will follow the guidelines required by Chelmsford Museum (Chelmsford Museum does not issue accession numbers for paper archives).
- 8.2 The photographic archive consists of digital photographs which will be presented to and as requested by Chelmsford Museum.
- 8.3 Copy disks of material held on computers will be presented to Chelmsford Museum.
- 8.4 A summary of the contents of the archive shall be supplied to ECC HAMP at the time of deposition at Chelmsford Museum.
- 8.5 The results will be submitted for publication, at a summary level, in *Essex Archaeology and History* in the year following the work.

## 9 Acknowledgements

The Colchester Archaeological Trust is grateful to the following for their help and co-operation during the course of the project:

Peter Jones of Shenfield Hall, for commissioning and funding the work  
Anwen Cooper, Archaeological Officer for the HAMP section of Essex County Council

## 10 References

- Ingram, Mark, 1995 'Brentwood, land near St Mary's Church, Shenfield', in Gilman & Bennett 1995, 241
- Gilman, PJ, & Bennett, A, 1995 'Archaeology in Essex 1994', *Essex Archaeology and History*, **26**, 238-58

Kate Orr, April 2002

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### Distribution list:

Peter Jones of Shenfield Hall  
Anwen Cooper, HAMP Officer, Essex County Council  
Essex Heritage Conservation Record, Essex County Council

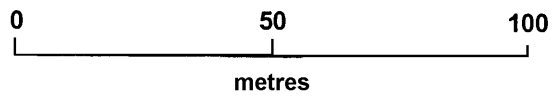
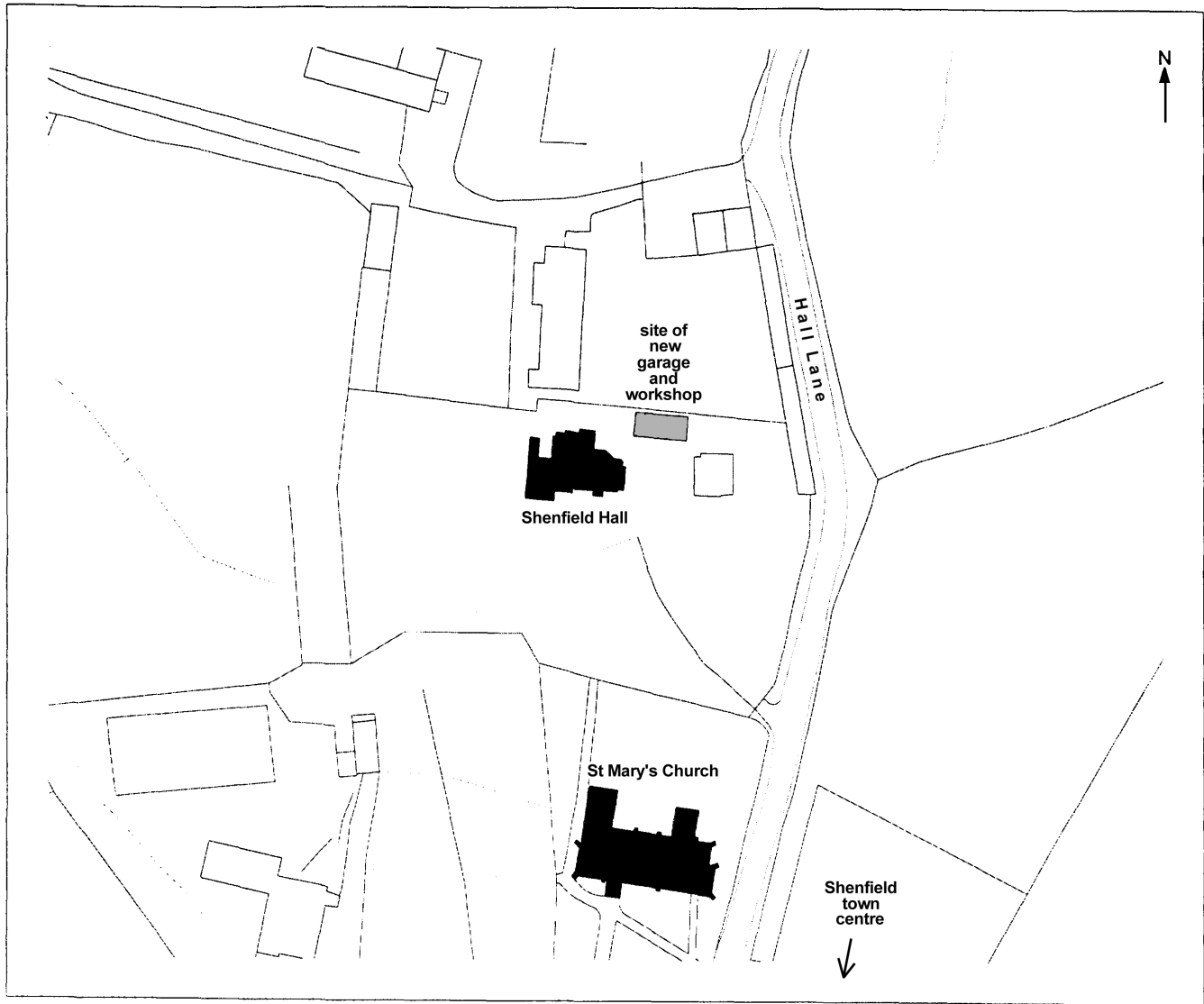


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Checked by: Howard Brooks  
Date: 17.04.02



**Fig 1 Site location.**

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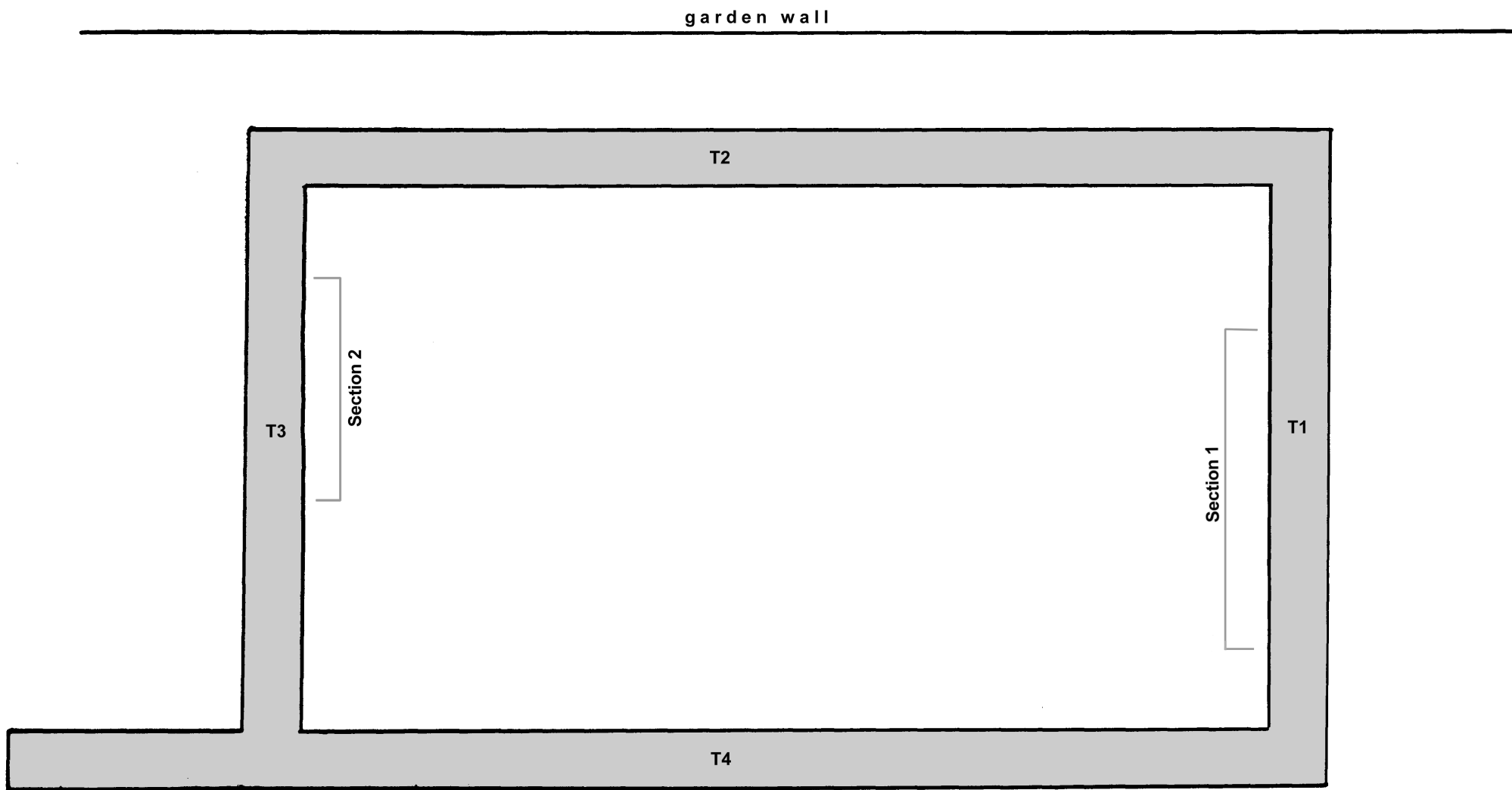


Fig 2 Plan of foundation trenches for garage and workshop,  
scale 1:50.

S

west-facing section

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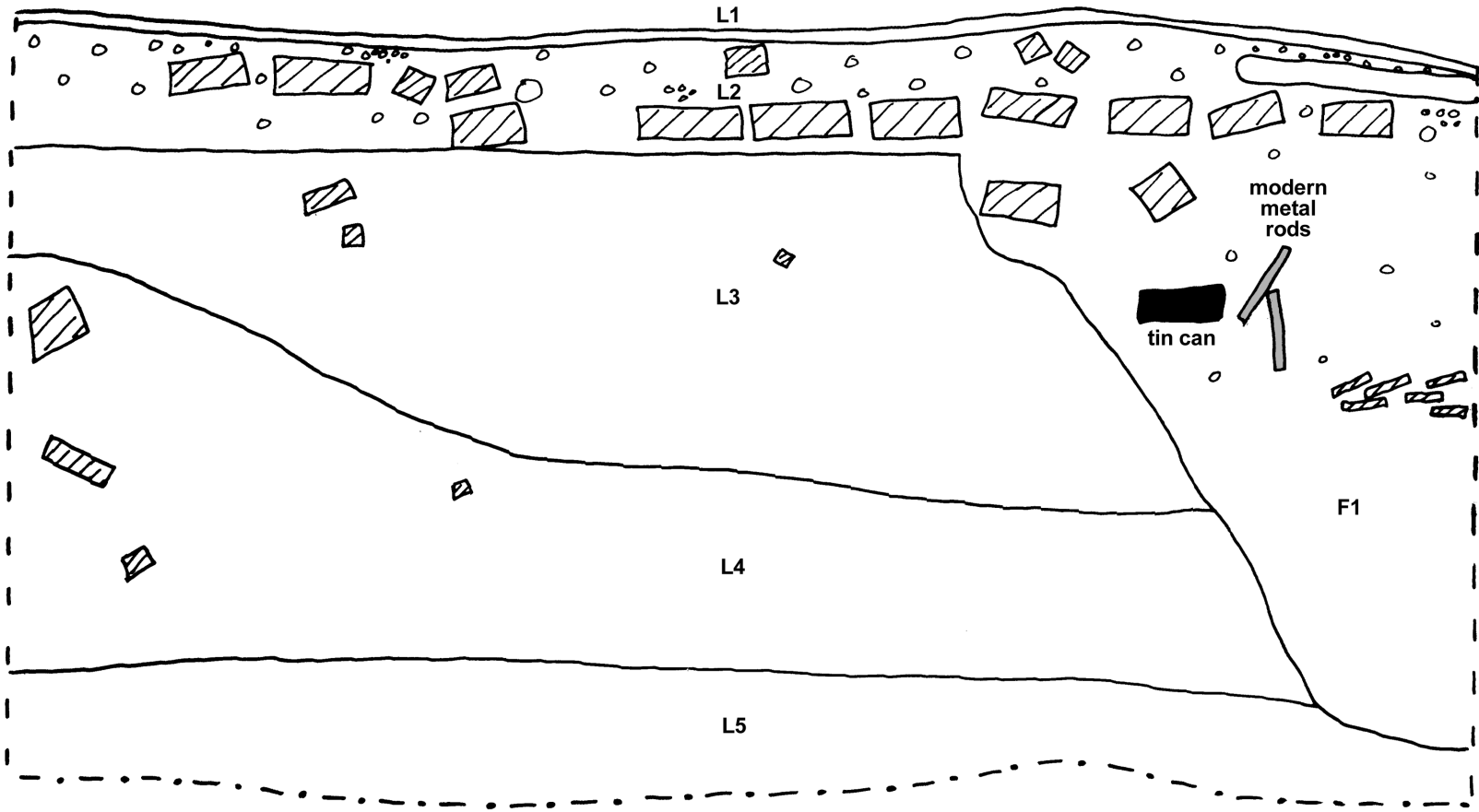



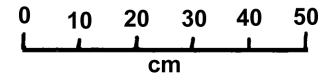
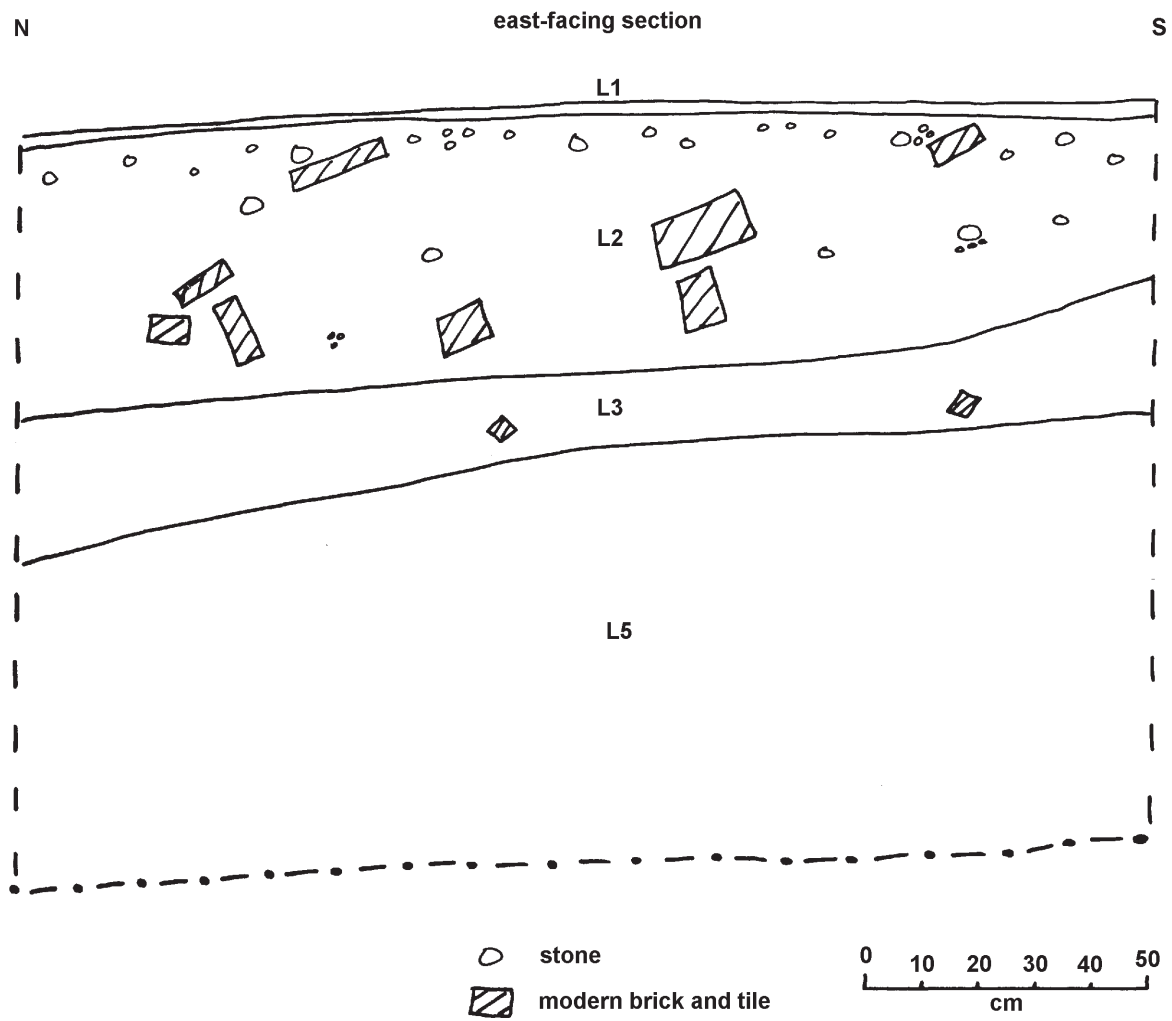


Fig 3 Section drawing of T1, Section 1;  
scale 1:15.

-  stone
-  modern brick and tile
-  peg-tile







**Fig 4** Section drawing of T3, Section 2;  
scale 1:15.

**Essex Heritage Conservation Record/  
Essex Archaeology and History**

**Summary sheet**

<b>Site name/address:</b> Shenfield Hall, Hall Lane, Shenfield, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Shenfield	<b>District:</b> Brentwood
<b>NGR:</b> TQ 6050 9526	<b>Site code:</b> BWSH 02
<b>Type of work:</b> Watching brief	<b>Site director/group:</b> Colchester Archaeological Trust
<b>Date of work:</b> March 2002	<b>Size of area investigated:</b> 5.75m x 11.5m
<b>Location of finds/curating museum:</b> Chelmsford Museum	<b>Funding source:</b> House owner
<b>Further seasons anticipated:</b> No	<b>Related EHCR nos:</b> 5348-5349, 5485-5487, 5510-5514, 20262
<b>Final report:</b> CAT Report 181 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
<b>Periods represented:</b> Modern	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b> Observations were made during an archaeological watching brief on the construction of a double garage and workshop at Shenfield Hall, Hall Lane, Shenfield, Essex. All the trenches cut only modern material and nothing of archaeological significance was observed.	
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b>	
<b>Author of summary:</b> Kate Orr	<b>Date of summary:</b> March 2002