

**An archaeological watching brief at
Ringmer Village Hall,
Lewes Road,
Ringmer,
East Sussex.**

October 2015



**report prepared by
Adam Wightman BSc MA**

on behalf of Ringmer Village Hall Management Committee

NGR: TQ 4473 1244

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on October 13th 2015 during the construction of an extension at the Ringmer Village Hall. No archaeological features, deposits or concentrations of artefacts/ecofacts were identified.

Introduction

This is the archive report on the archaeological watching brief carried out by Adam Wightman (Senior Project Officer at the Colchester Archaeological Trust) on behalf of the Ringmer Village Hall Management Committee at Ringmer Village Hall, Lewes Road, Ringmer, East Sussex (TQ 4473 124) (Fig 1). The archaeological monitoring work was undertaken during the excavation of footings trenches for a single storey extension (application LW/09/0960) on the 13th of October 2015.

The East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Archaeologist considered it possible that the groundworks associated with the project may adversely impact upon buried archaeological remains. As a result, it was recommended that a Level 1 Archaeological Watching Brief be undertaken with the aim of identifying and recording any surviving archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks.

The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) provided by the ESCC Archaeology Team (ESCCAT, 2013). The WSI provides background information on the site, much of which is reused in this report with due acknowledgement.

The proposed development is situated within an archaeologically sensitive area defining the historic core of the medieval and post-medieval village of Ringmer, which includes a 15th century church and many historic listed buildings. An examination of historic maps records an earlier building on the Village Hall site. Ringmer was well known in the medieval period as it had a pottery industry producing cheap domestic wares. There are 11 medieval sites in the area and 22 post-medieval sites, the village grew during the early post-medieval period, evidence of which can be seen by the numerous listed buildings from this time.

According to the British Geological Survey (BGS website www.bgs.ac.uk Geoindex), the site is situated on Gault Clay and lies at an average elevation of 26m AOD.

Methodology

On the 13th of October 2015, roughly two thirds of the total length of the footings trenches was excavated under continuous archaeological supervision using a mechanical excavator equipped with either a 600mm or 450mm wide toothless bucket.

The archaeological monitoring included an inspection of the surface of the interface between the overburden and surface of the natural clay, all excavated soil deposits and the edges of the footings trenches. The visibility was generally poor/moderate. However, any significant archaeological features or finds would have been visible.

Results

In the southernmost NE-SW orientated footings trench, a modern topsoil (L1) overlay a layer of modern make-up (L2) which, in turn, overlay the natural blue/grey Gault Clay (L3) (Figs 2 & 3, Plate 1). The topsoil (L1) was a mid-grey clayey-silt with common charcoal flecks and modern brick fragments. L1 contained modern plastic, metal and building material fragments which date to the second half of the 20th century (none of which were retained). The make-up layer (L2) was a wet, mid-grey/brown silty-clay. A close examination of the L2 arisings revealed fragments of frogged brick, peg-tile, glass bottles (including a Codd-neck bottle with 'BELL BROS & BOWES LIMITED BRIGHTON' written down the side), animal bone, flower

pot fragments and pottery sherds (including pieces from post-medieval red earthenware vessels with internal glazing). None of the finds have been retained.

The topsoil (L1) was present at a consistent thickness across the development area (Fig 3). However, the make-up layer (L2) was thicker in the southern footings trenches than in the centre and was absent in the northern trenches (Fig 3). This suggests that L2 was deposited on the southern half of the site to build up the ground level in this area. Based on the finds recovered from L2, this probably occurred sometime in the late 19th/20th century.

The only features noted cut into the natural clay were two service trenches and an infilled modern post-hole (Fig 2).

The footings trenches were excavated to a depth of between 1m and 2.7m below modern ground level. The depth of the footing trenches was dependant on the distance from a Hawthorn tree which had once occupied part of the site (Fig 2).



Plate 1 L1-L3 in the southernmost footings trench, facing west.

Discussion

No deposits or finds of archaeological interest were noted during the monitoring of the footings trenches. Although visibility was not always good due to the smearing of the trench sections, most archaeological features, particularly significant ones containing finds, would have been visible.

The presence of modern make-up or modern topsoil directly overlying the natural Gault Clay suggests that soil accumulation layers which may have contained archaeological deposits or finds had been removed. It would seem more likely that this occurred in the 1970's when the village hall was expanded rather than during the construction of the original hall in the late 19th century.

The negative results from the archaeological monitoring demonstrate that the works on the Village Hall extension have not adversely affected the archaeological resource of the village of Ringmer.

References

- ESCCAT 2013 *Specification for a Level 1 archaeological watching brief during the groundworks at Village Hall, Lewes Road, Ringmer.*

Acknowledgements

Adam Wightman would like to thank the Ringmer Village Hall Management Committee for commissioning the project and Greg Chuter from the ESCC Archaeology team who monitored the project and provided valuable help & guidance.

Sussex HER summary sheet

Project code	AW15/01					
Planning reference	LW/09/0960					
Site address	Ringmer Village Hall, Lewes Road, Ringmer, East Sussex					
District/Borough	Lewes, East Sussex					
NGR (12 figures)	TQ 544745 112436					
Geology	Gault clay					
Fieldwork type	Eval	Excav	Watching Brief X	Historic Building Recording	Survey	Other
Date of fieldwork	13 th October 2015					
Sponsor/client	Ringmer Village Hall Management Committee					
Project manager/ supervisor	Adam Wightman					
Period summary	Palaeolithic	Mesolithic	Neolithic	Bronze Age	Iron Age	
	Roman	Anglo-Saxon	Medieval	Post-Medieval	Other X	
Project summary (100 word max)	<i>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on October 13th 2015 during the construction of an extension at the Ringmer Village Hall. No archaeological features, deposits or concentrations of artefacts/ecofacts were identified.</i>					
Museum/Accession No.	Archive deposited with East Sussex Historic Environment Record, East Sussex Record Office, The KEEP, Woollards Way, Brighton, BN1 9BP,					

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OASIS ID: colchest3-241085

Project details

Project name	An archaeological watching brief at Ringmer Village Hall, Lewes Road, Ringmer, East Sussex.
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Ringmer Village Hall, Lewes Road, Ringmer, East Sussex, during the construction of a single storey extension on the north-eastern side of the existing hall. No archaeological features, deposits or concentrations of artefacts/ecofacts were identified.
Project dates	Start: 13-10-2015 End: 13-10-2015
Previous/future work	Not known / No
Any associated project reference codes	AW15/01 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Project location

Country	England
Site location	EAST SUSSEX LEWES RINGMER Ringmer Village Hall
Postcode	BN8 5QH
Study area	36 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 544745 112436 50.879428172482 0.196080640152 50 52 45 N 000 11 45 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 25.26m Max: 25.91m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	ADAM WIGHTMAN INDEPENDENT PROJECT
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Project brief originator	East Sussex County Council Archaeology Team
Project design originator	Greg Chuter, East Sussex County Council Archaeology Team
Project director/manager	Adam Wightman
Project supervisor	Adam Wightman
Type of sponsor/funding body	Other Charitable Trust
Name of sponsor/funding body	Ringmer Village Hall Management Committe

Project archives

Digital Archive recipient	East Sussex Historic Environment Record
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An archaeological watching brief at Ringmer Village Hall, Lewes Road, Ringmer, East Sussex
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Wightman, A
Other bibliographic details	AW15/01
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Issuer or publisher	Adam Wightman
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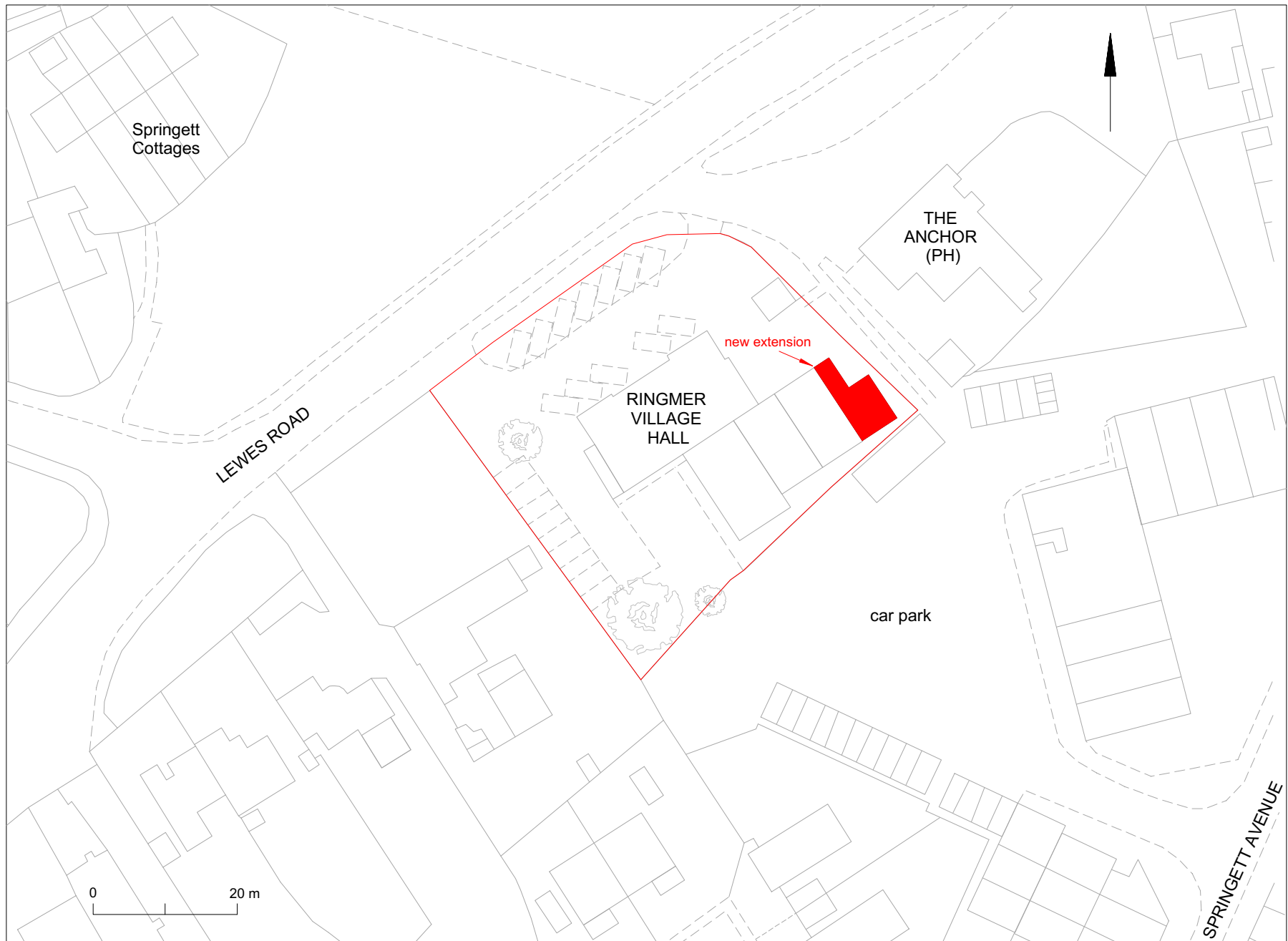


Fig 1 Site Location.

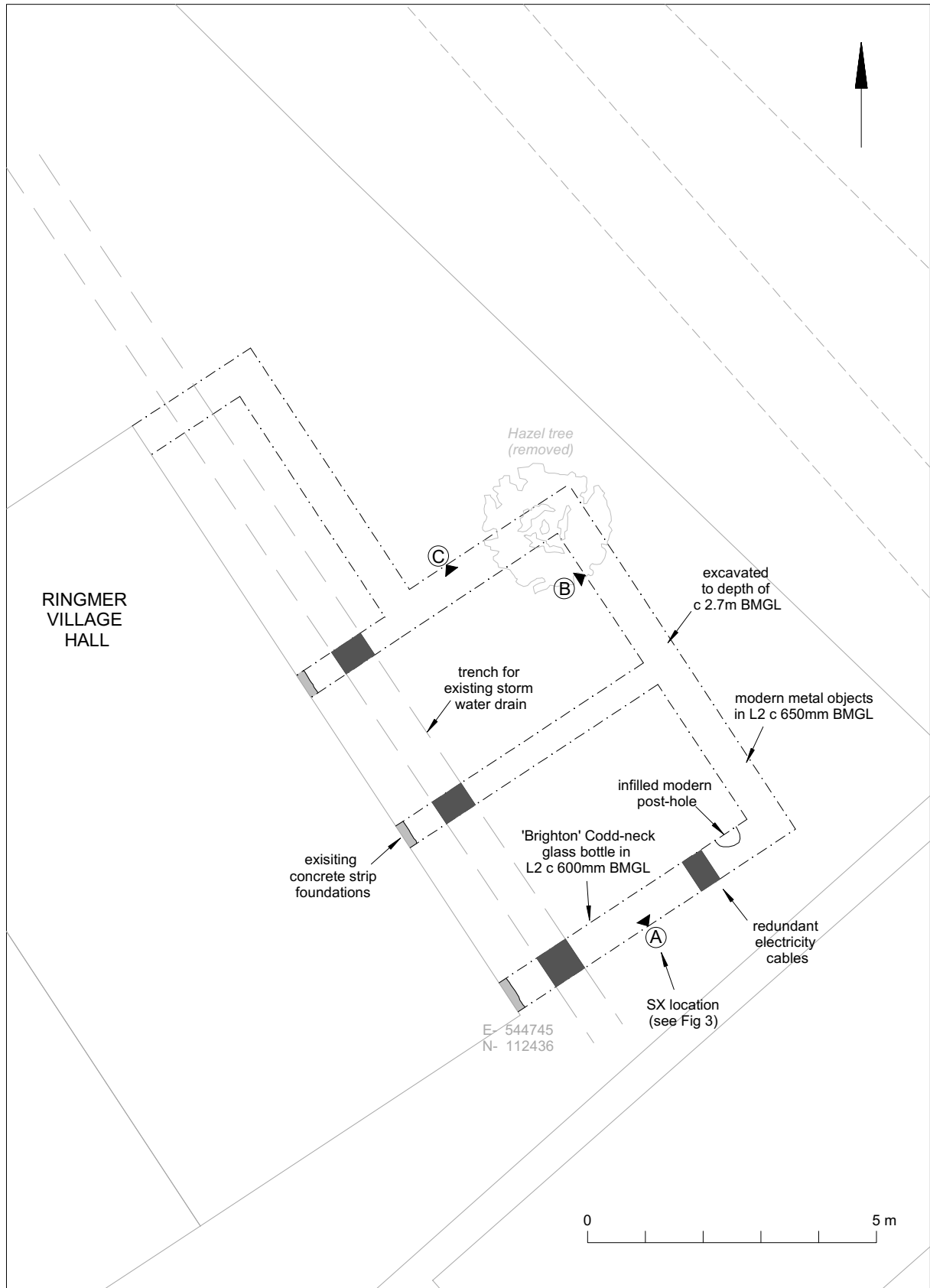
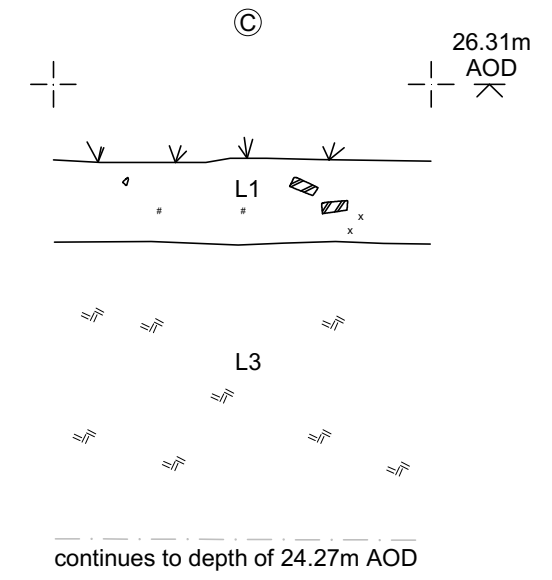
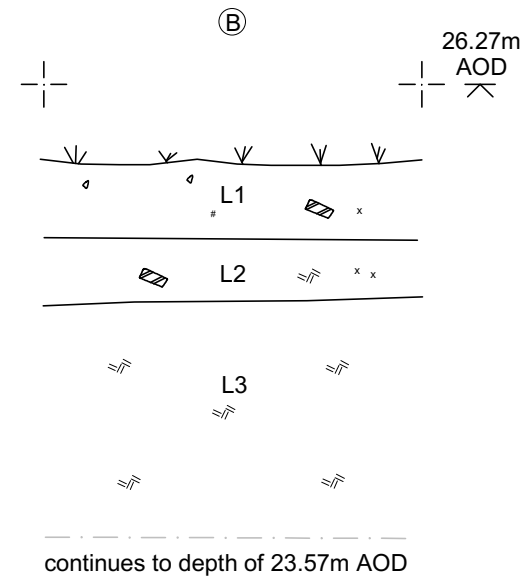
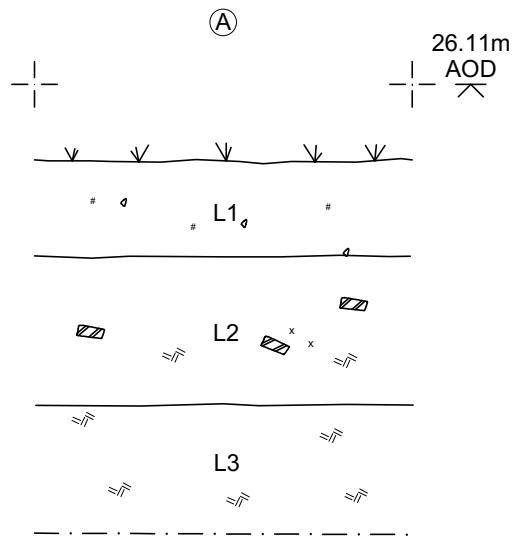


Fig 2 Watching Brief Results (BMGL= Below Modern Ground Level).



- small stones
- mortar
- post-Roman brick & tile
- charcoal
- clay



Fig 3 Representative sections (see Fig 2 for SX locations).