

An archaeological watching brief

on land off

Nunns Road, Colchester

September 1999

Colchester Museum Accession: 1999.135



COLCHESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST,
12 LEXDEN ROAD,
COLCHESTER,
ESSEX C03 3NF
tel/fax: (01206) 541051
email: archaeologists@colchester-arch-trust.co.uk

CAT Report 50

COLCHESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

CAT Project reference: **99/8b****Site/address:** Land off Nunns Road**NGR:** TL 9943 2544**Date:** 9th, 10th, 13th September 1999**Officer:** C Austin**Contractors:** Camelot Construction**Report:**9th September 1999

Prior machining to a depth of 2.65m along the southern edge of the site, and extending approximately 2.50m northwards highlighted the presence crumbled mortar, tile, septaria and tesserae indicating Roman demolition deposits overlying surviving Roman floor levels 2.05m below the modern level of Nunns Road (L4, L8 Section 1). It is likely that the initial machining would have cut into some surviving Roman contexts given that they show in section. Stratigraphy was only seen along a limited part of the section totalling about 1.4m. The SW corner of the site with dark grey silts L5 forming later intrusive cuts has destroyed any traces of Roman archaeology. Sheet metal shuttering and moder debris masked any evidence of surviving archaeology along the remainder of the south section.

13th September 1999

During the weekend of 11th and 12th September two amateur archaeologists excavated beneath the eastern section of the site and uncovered two patches of *in situ* Roman tessellated floor F2. This floor surface survives 2.65m below the modern road level, but lies outside the current area of proposed development. The floor had a deposit of very pale brown mortar with *opus signinum* fragments within, sealing it (L20, L21). L21 is cut by a later feature F3 with a contrasting dark silty fill, while the base of a brick wall sit directly on top of the floor surface to the north. After recording, the tessellated floor was covered over in order to preserve it.

10th September 1999

The remainder of the site was reduced to 2.65m below the Nunns Road street level. At this level modern construction debris was visible over most of the site. Mixed in with this were many fragments of tile, mortar, and tesserae, along with pfinds ranging from Roman to post medieval. Disturbance of the underlying ground revealed two small areas of surviving Roman deposits. Firstly, an area of possible prepared surface or floor make up F1. Comprising of a compacted mix of stones and tile fragments with mortar lumps and pottery within, it overlies a similar stony gravelly deposit L18. The very mixed nature of these contexts does not allow a firm conclusion as an actual surface for occupation. The extent of this feature is unknown, but in the area exposed it was truncated by a likely pit cut.

The second area to the west side of the site is of severely truncated deposits L15, L16 and L17. L16 comprises broken chunks of *opus signinum* which are possibly the remains of a base for a floor.

On the east side of the site were very disturbed deposits which are highly likely to also be demolition debris from Roman buildings, given the presence of mortar, septaria and many tessera cubes.

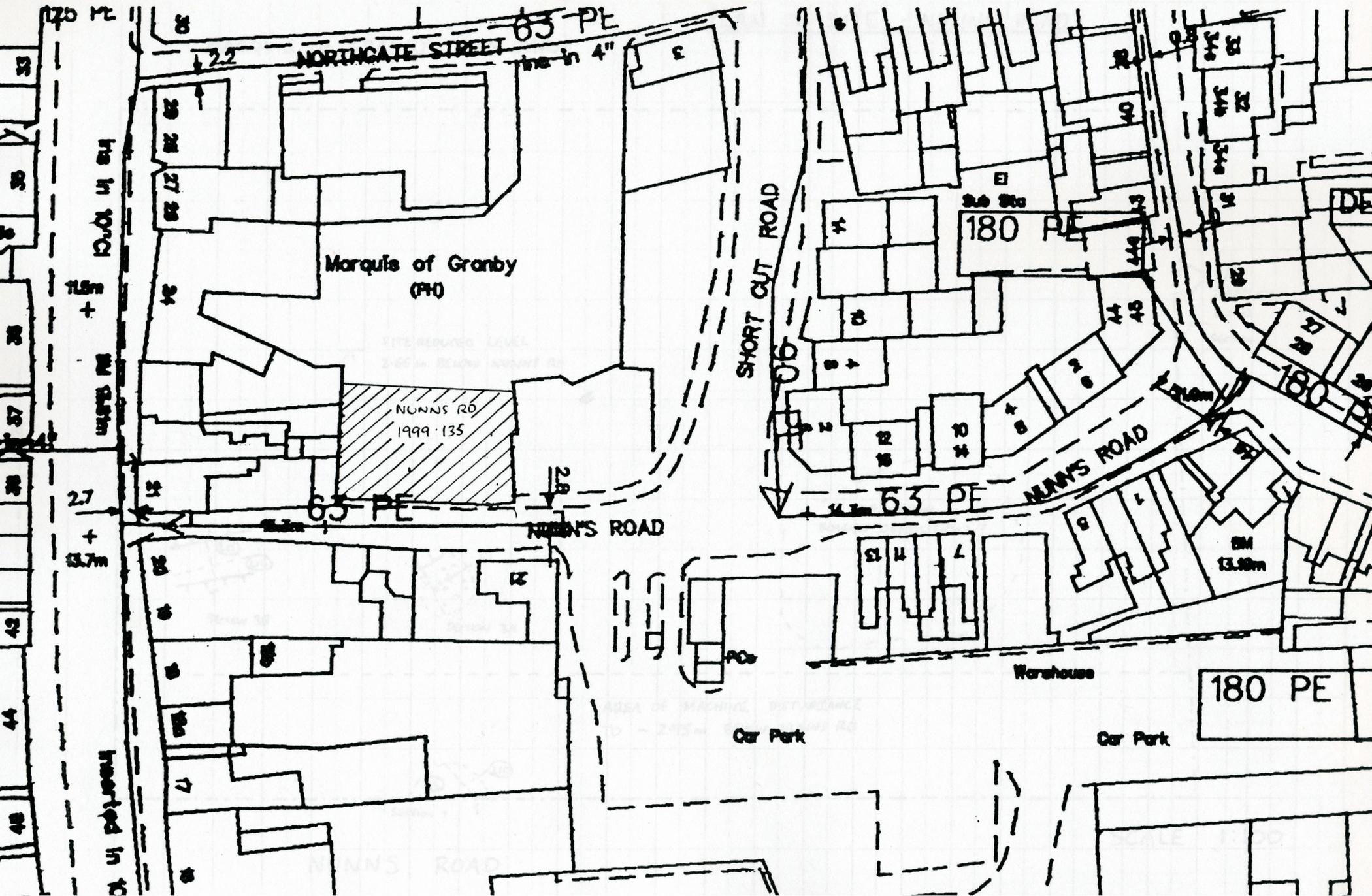
Finds:

L6: 37 sherds
Roman Grey ware CAM 268 - 2nd century or later
Rhenish ware (?mid Gaulish), Beaker form 1 - late 2nd/early 3rd century

L10: 12sherds
Roman Grey ware CAM 268 - 2nd century or later

Summary:

This site located between Nunns Road and the car park to the rear of the Marquis of Granby Public House has been reduced to a new level which is now 2.65m below the present height of Nunns Road. The southern section along Nunns Road shows that archaeological deposits of Roman origin survive beneath the road at a depth of 2.05m, though later activity has probably destroyed much of this. The archaeology at the reduced level on the site itself appears to survive as "islands" which are the result of subsequent activity cutting into the Roman contexts. A considerable amount of Roman building demolition was seen at a depth of approximately 2.60m; this included tile, mortar, septaria and tesserae. A small area of a possible crude prepared surface was also recorded. Beneath the eastern site section (outside the proposed development area), two small patches of *in situ* Roman tessellated floor surface were uncovered by 'amateur' archaeologists. This survives at 2.65m below. Observation of this site therefore shows the potential for archaeological stratigraphy to survive beneath the proposed development.



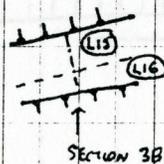
PLAN OF SITE - NUNNS ROAD

MARQUIS OF GRANBY CAR PARK



^ SITE REDUCED LEVEL
2.65m BELOW NUNNS RD

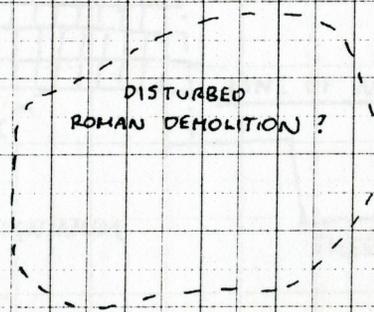
F2
TILELATED
FLOOR
SECTION 2



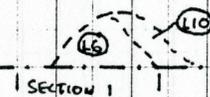
SECTION 3B



SECTION 3A



AREA OF MACHINE DISTURBANCE
TO ~ 2.95m BELOW NUNNS RD

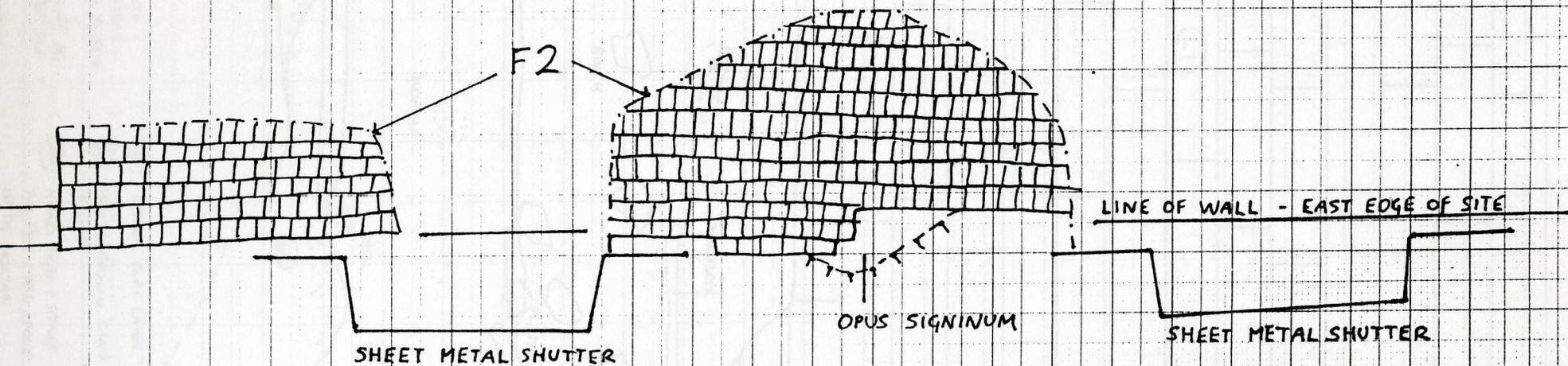


SECTION 1

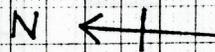
NUNNS ROAD

SCALE 1:100

PLAN - EXPOSED TESSELATED FLOOR - UNDERMINED EAST EDGE OF SITE



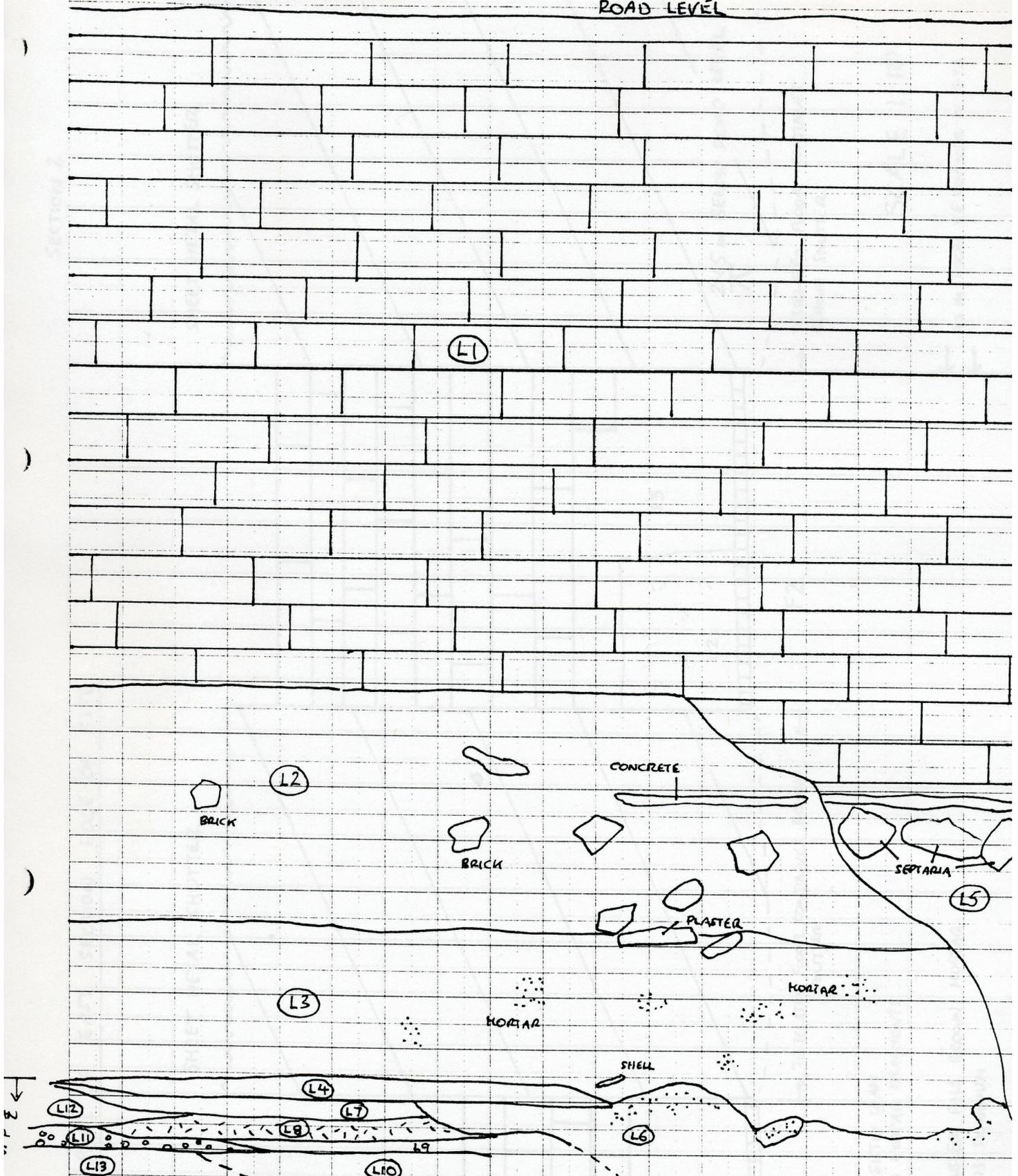
PLAN 1:10



SOUTH SECTION OF SITE

SECTION 1

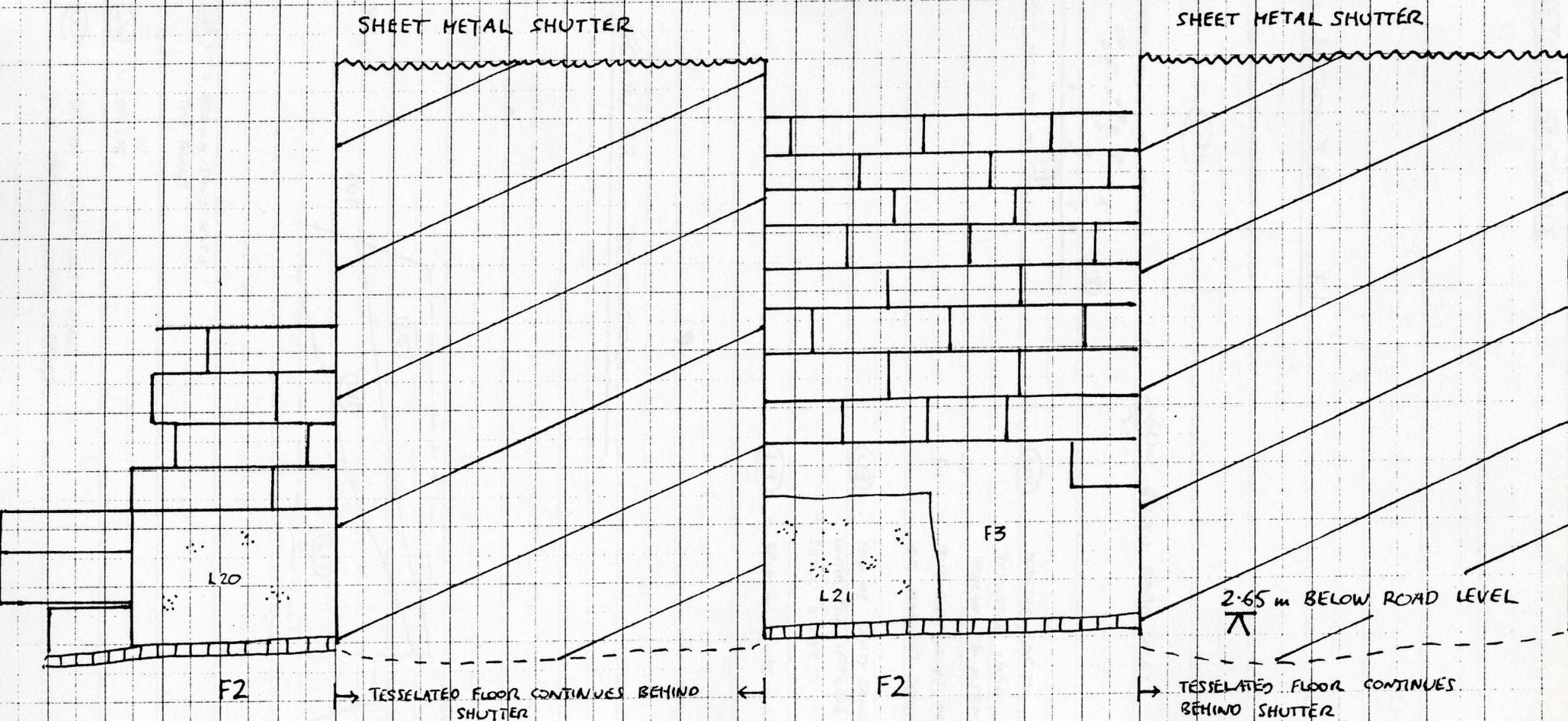
ROAD LEVEL



SCALE 1:10

- (L1) BRICK WALL
- (L2) BLACK SILT + RUBBLE
- (L3) CRUMBLED MORTAR + PLASTER - ROMAN DEFORMATION
- (L4) MEDIUM BROWN CLAYEY SAND
- (L5) BLACK SILTS BRICK, STONE + CONCRETE RUBBLE
- (L6) MORTAR + OP SIG ROMAN POT TILE
- (L7) ORANGE SAND + CHARCOAL FLECKS
- (L8) BROWN CLAY LAYER
- (L9) ORANGE/BROWN SAND + CLAY
- (L10) MIXED SILTS + STONES TILE POT SHELL, BONE OP SIG MORTAR
- (L11) MORTAR - CHALK + SHELL
- (L12) v DISTURBED - MIXED CLAY, SAND + STONES
- (L13) STONE + GRAVEL + CLAY + SILT, SHELL + OP SIG

DETAIL - PART OF EAST SECTION EDGE OF SITE



F3 = DARK GREY SILTY LOAM
WITH TILE + MORTAR FRAGMENTS

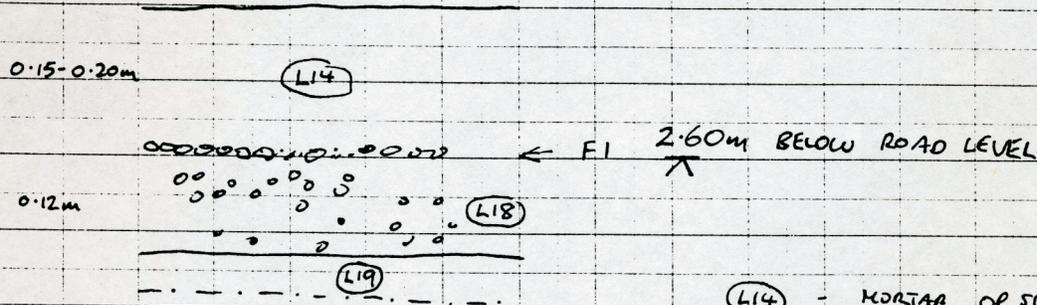
+ = CRUMBLEO PALE BROWN MORTAR
+ OPUS SIGNINUM

SCALE 1:10

10 m FROM SE CORNER OF SITE

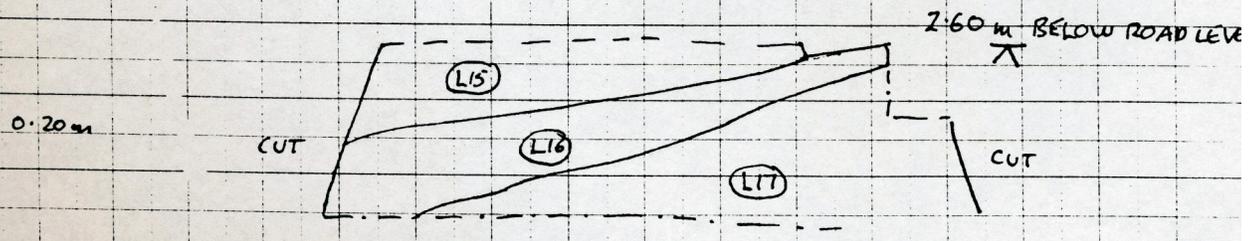
SKETCH SECTIONS

SKETCH SECTION 3A F1



- (L14) - MORTAR, OP SIG, TILE POT
TESSERAE, SHELL
ROMAN DEMOLITION
- F1 - POSSIBLE CRUDE PREPARED SURFACE
OR MAKE UP DEPOSIT
- (L18) - MIX OF DIRTY SANDS & GRAVELS
WITH TILE, SEPTARIA, MORTAR FRAGS
SHELL & POT
- (L19) - BROWN SANDS & GRAVELS

SKETCH SECTION 3B - DEMOLITION



- (L15) - BROWN SAND WITH
TILE FRAGS
- (L16) - OP SIG
- (L17) - BROWN CLAYEY SILT + SAND
TILE, SEPTARIA LUMPS & FRAGS

