

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
Project No. 577.1
March 1999

**MOSELEY ICE HOUSE
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF
(2nd Report)**

by
Chris Patrick

For further information please contact:
Simon Buteux, Iain Ferris or Gwilym Hughes (Directors)
Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT
Tel: 0121 414 5513
Fax: 0121 414 5516
E-Mail: BUFAU@bham.ac.uk
Web Address: <http://www.bufau.bham.ac.uk>

MOSELEY ICE HOUSE (2nd Report)

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Chris Patrick (22nd March 1999)

1. Introduction

The Moseley ice house is situated within the privately owned Moseley Park located just off the Alcester/Salisbury Road (NGR SP 4075 2833). The ice house probably dates to the late eighteenth century and was used to store ice collected from the nearby pond. The structure is built of brick and entered through an arched doorway with slightly curved walls flanking the approach; inside a short tunnel leads to a domed storage area. The brick construction is capped with a covering of clay and earth.

Recent consolidation work on the structure necessitated the removal of some of the earthen mound and the clearance of earth from around the doorway. A previous watching brief carried out in December 1998 (BUFAU report 577) noted hitherto unrecorded brickwork and stone in three trial pits around the structures entrance. Pits 1 and 3 were located at the southern terminals of the curved entrance walls and found brickwork that was interpreted as wall footings. Trench 2 was located on the pathway between the two walls and revealed a level brick surface.

2.Method

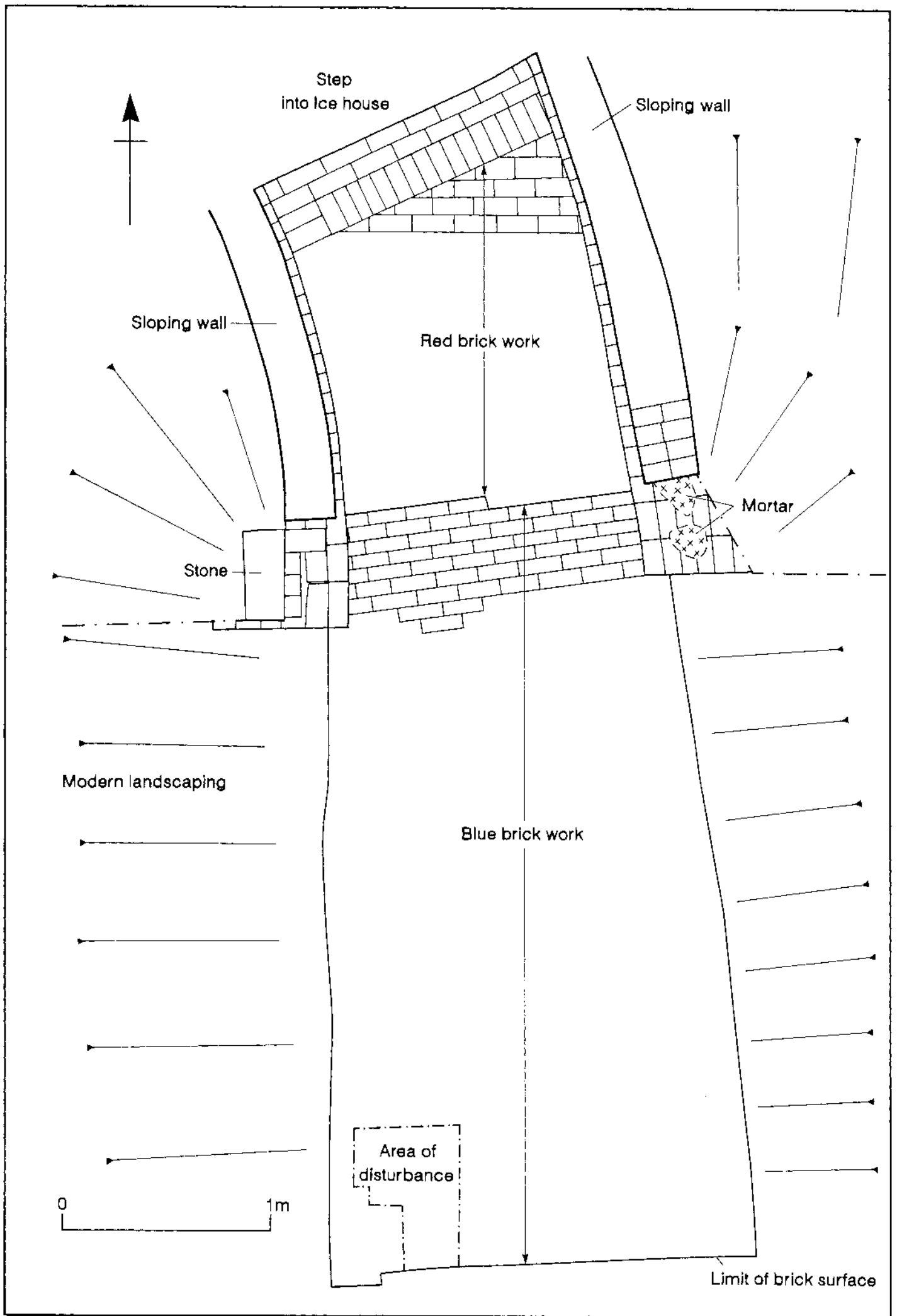
The work on the 22nd March consisted of removing with a machine the remaining earth from around the entrance way in order to landscape the ice house for future display and to confirm the extent of the brick path discovered the previous December. The brickwork was recorded by a combination of measured drawing and photography.

3.Results (see figure)

The whole of the entranceway was cleared of earth and cleaned revealing a continuous brick surface approximately 2m in width running for 5.7m from the threshold of the ice house southwards. Two metres south of the threshold the brickwork changed from a soft red-coloured brick, similar to that used in the ice house structure, to a harder blue-coloured brick.. The brickwork found at the ends of the two entranceway walls was exposed further and was found to comprise rectangular terminals.

4.Discussion

The brick surface can be confirmed as the original pathway to the ice house. It had been suggested previously that entrance into the ice house involved either a ramp or a step, but in fact the path leads straight in, probably with the original door opening outwards. The change in the brickwork of the path may indicate that it had been extended, or that the softer red brick had worn out and had been replaced. The location of the terminals seems to confirm that what has been exposed represents the full extent of the entranceway walls.



Step into Ice house

Sloping wall

Sloping wall

Red brick work

Stone

Mortar

Modern landscaping

Blue brick work

Area of disturbance

0 1m

Limit of brick surface