

**72 Bridge Street,  
Persnore, Worcestershire:  
an archaeological  
watching brief 2000**

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit  
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by  
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### **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at 72 Bridge Street, Pershore, Worcestershire (NGR S0 95044544; WSM 16048) in June 2000, during the excavation of foundations for an extension at the rear of the house. The proposed development was situated within a Medieval tenement plot, and there was high potential for the recovery of both buried archaeological deposits and palaeoenvironmental remains. The results of the watching brief revealed post-medieval garden soil in the northern part of the foundation trench, and an old cellar and associated disturbance in the southern part. No significant archaeological remains survived.*

### **Introduction**

This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief, undertaken during the excavation of a foundation trench prior to the construction of a rear extension at 72 Bridge Street, Pershore (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Gill and David Preece and was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit in June 2000. The proposed development (Planning Application ref. W98/1499) was situated within a Medieval tenement plot (WSM 16048) and there was, therefore, high potential for the recovery of buried archaeological deposits and palaeoenvironmental evidence during the course of the development. In line with guidance given in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16, and in accordance with the aims of the Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan (policy CTC5) and the Wychavon District Local Plan (policy CB18), a planning condition was placed on the development proposals. The planning condition required that an archaeological watching brief should be maintained during any groundworks taking place on the site. The watching brief was conducted in accordance with a brief prepared by the Planning Advisory Section of the County Archaeological Service (Hereford and Worcester County Council 1998).

### **The Site**

The site (centred on NGR S0 95044544) is located towards the south end of Bridge Street (Figs. 1 and 2) which, together with the High Street, forms the major north-south axis through the town. The town itself lies within a meander of the River Avon, on a terrace sloping down to the river floodplain to the east. The solid geology consists of Lower Lias clay overlain by alluvium and river terrace deposits.

## **Archaeological background**

The town of Pershore has been studied as part of the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey (Dalwood 1996). There is evidence of Roman occupation in the form of chance finds and excavated deposits. Documentary research suggests that Pershore formed the centre of a large Anglo-Saxon estate, and that it was a moderately prosperous medieval town, with the bridge over the River Avon and associated routeways conferring it with a certain economic importance (Dalwood 1996).

The modern town plan preserves much of the plan of the medieval town. Number 72 Bridge Street lies within the historic core and is situated within a Medieval tenement plot (WSM 16048), one of an extensive series of such plots deduced from historic maps. Analysis by Slater (Dalwood 1996) has suggested that tenements such as this one, to the west of Bridge Street, are later than those to the east. There is high potential within the town for the survival of buried archaeological deposits, and for the recovery of artefacts and palaeoenvironmental remains. Excavation within tenement plots in Pershore has consistently revealed archaeological deposits relating to medieval domestic occupation.

## **Aims**

The aim of the archaeological watching brief was to record any archaeological and palaeoenvironmental remains uncovered during the course of the groundworks, in order to contribute to an understanding of the nature, extent and significance of archaeological remains within the area.

Specific objectives were to:

- i. monitor any ground-breaking activity in the development area for the purpose of locating and recording any archaeological deposits or palaeoenvironmental remains which may have survived.
- ii. sample and recover any contextual evidence which may assist in the interpretation of such remains.
- iii. consider the significance of any such remains in their local, regional, national or international context as appropriate.
- iv. report upon and make public, as appropriate, the results of any such discoveries.

## **Methodology**

Groundworks at the site consisted of the hand excavation of a 3-sided foundation trench, approximately 0.6m wide, to the rear of the property. The trench was adjacent to a relatively recent, single-storey, rear extension (Fig. 3). The depth of material removed ranged from 1-1.5m.

Any significant archaeological deposits were to be excavated by hand and recorded on *pro-forma* record cards supplemented by scale plans, section drawings and photographs,

where appropriate. Samples for palaeoenvironmental analysis were to be taken as appropriate. Where no archaeological deposits were identified, the stratigraphy was to be recorded and photographed. These records comprise the site archive, which, at the time of writing, is stored at Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit.

### **Results (Fig. 3)**

The northern part of the trench was excavated to a depth of 1m, and the southern part to a maximum depth of 1.5m. The lowest deposit encountered at the northern end of the trench was an orange brown sandy gravel (1005) with some patches of mortar and brick fragments, which may represent redeposited natural. This deposit was cut by a root hole (F2) and was overlain to the south by a mid-brown pebbly deposit flecked with mortar (1004). Deposit 1004 was cut by a foundation trench (F3) for a cellar wall (1006). The north and west walls of this cellar were exposed, surviving to a height of 0.7m below the present surface. The west wall was bonded into the wall of 74 Bridge Street. The walls were built in Flemish bond, using hand-clamped bricks measuring 0.25m long and 0.06m high. Both walls were sitting on a compact layer, possibly a floor surface (1007), approximately 1.45m below the present ground surface. The cellar had been backfilled with a deep deposit of brick rubble (1003), which was overlain on the north by a deposit of dark brown, stoney garden soil (1002) containing fragments of demolition rubble. This deposit extended northwards across the rest of the trench, reaching a maximum depth of 0.5m. It was cut at the northern end by small pit (F1) and overlain by a line of mortar-rich soil (1001) and a deposit of mixed garden soil and rubble (1000).

### **Discussion**

The cellar is likely to belong to a building that stood to the rear of 72 Bridge Street prior to the construction of the existing single-storey rear extension. This earlier building is shown on the modern 1:1250 OS map, and scarring on the wall of 74 Bridge Street clearly showed that there had previously been a building attached to it. The bricks of the cellar indicate an 18th century date, and that the build was contemporary with the wall of 74 Bridge Street.

No significant archaeological deposits were encountered during the course of the watching brief. Any archaeological deposits which may have existed at the southern end of the trench would have been completely removed by the construction of the cellar, and much of the ground to the north had been disturbed by its construction. Undisturbed natural was not encountered anywhere within the trench. However, it should be noted that the groundworks covered a very small area, and that the cellarage disturbance is likely to be relatively localised. Medieval 'backplot' deposits may still survive elsewhere within the tenement plot.

## **Acknowledgements**

The watching brief was sponsored by Gill and David Preece and was carried out by Lucie Dingwall. The report was written by Lucie Dingwall and edited by Catharine Mould. John Halsted prepared the illustrations.

## **References**

Dalwood, H. 1996 *The Central Marches Historic Towns Survey: Archaeological Assessment of Pershore, Hereford and Worcester*. Hereford and Worcester County Council Report No. 335.

Hereford and Worcester County Council 1998 *Brief for an archaeological watching brief at 72 Bridge Street, Pershore, Worcestershire*.

## **List of Figures**

Fig. 1            Location of site, Ordnance Survey map 1991, 1:50,000.

Fig. 2            Location of site.

Fig. 3            Plan and section.

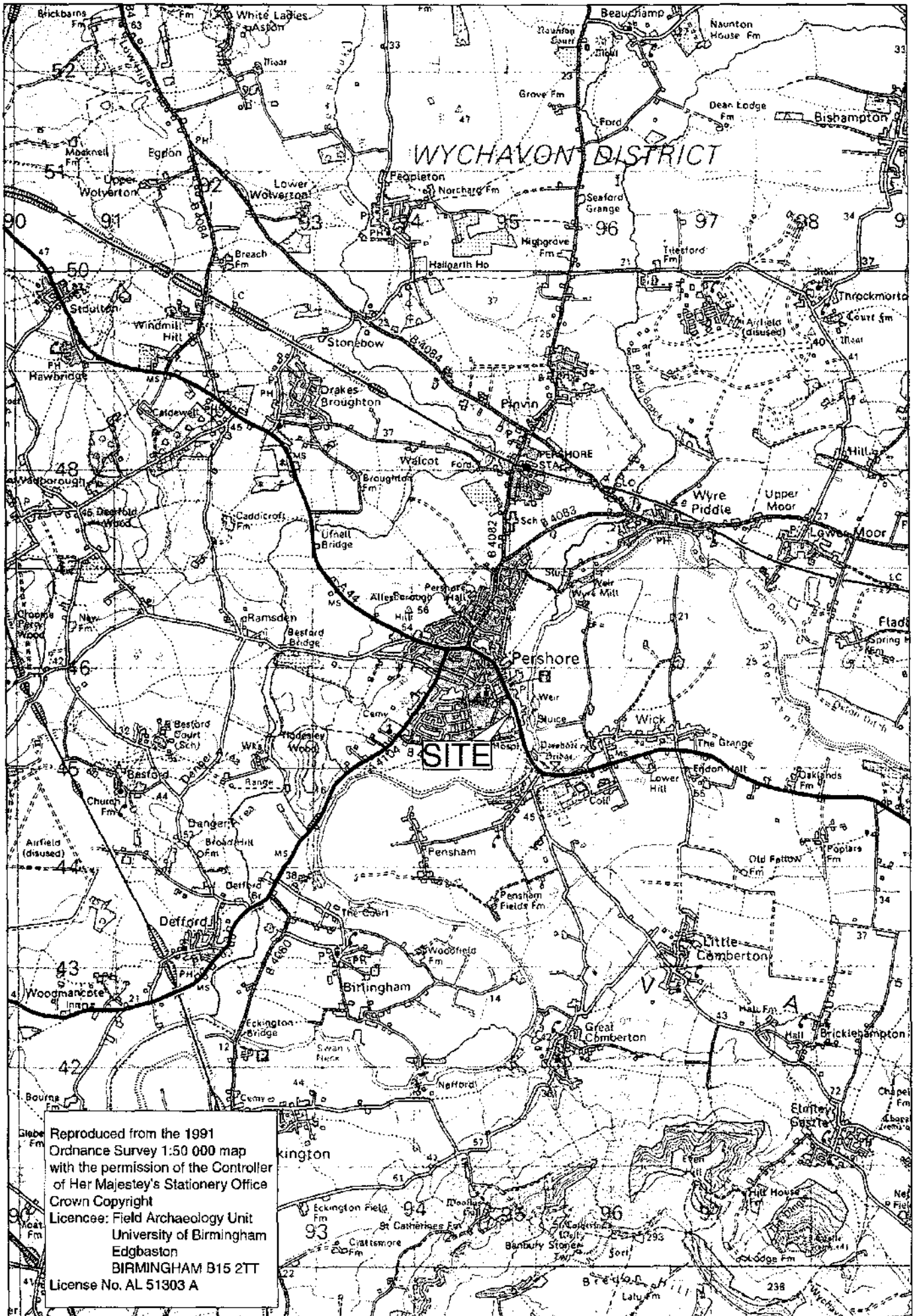


Fig.1

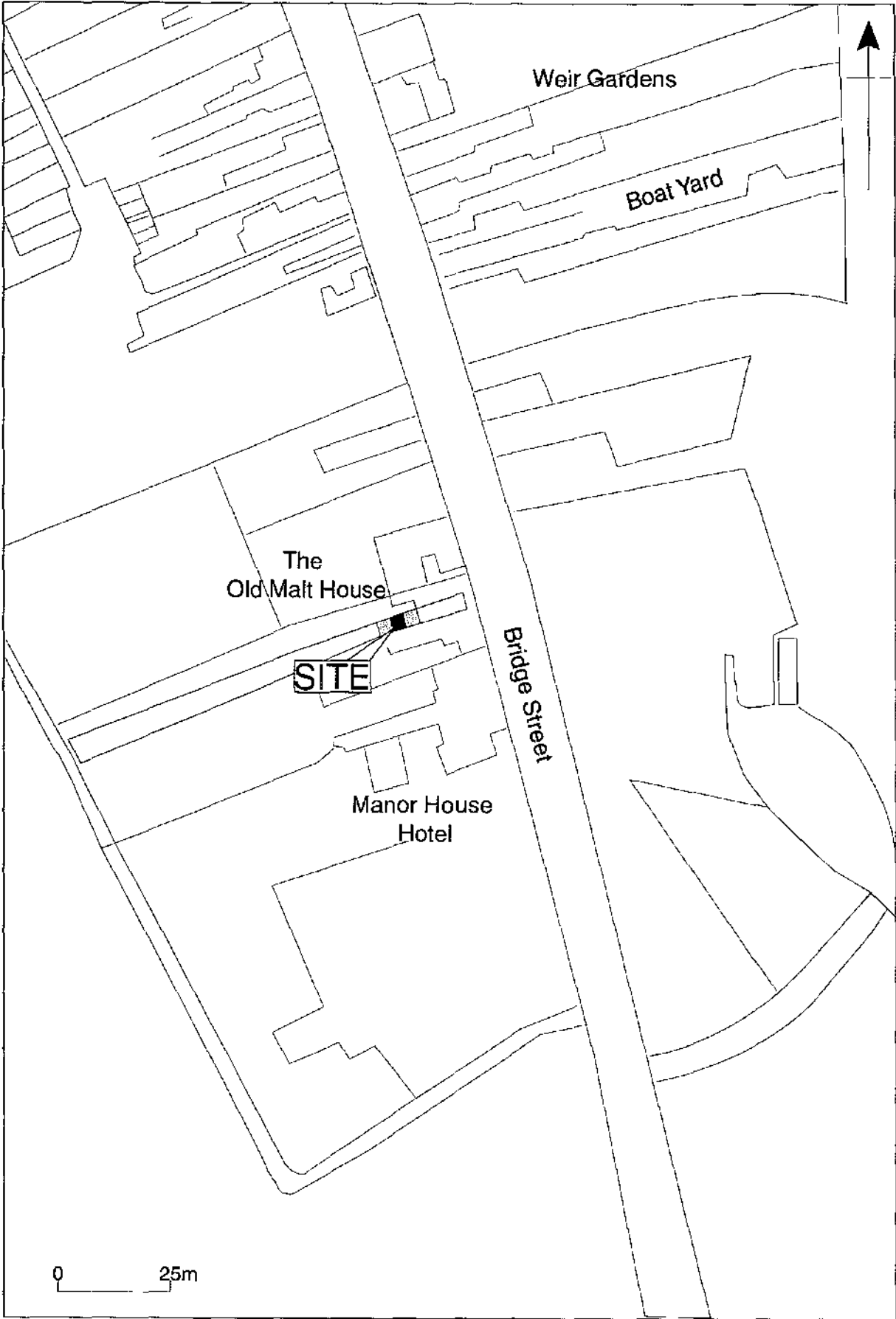


Fig.2



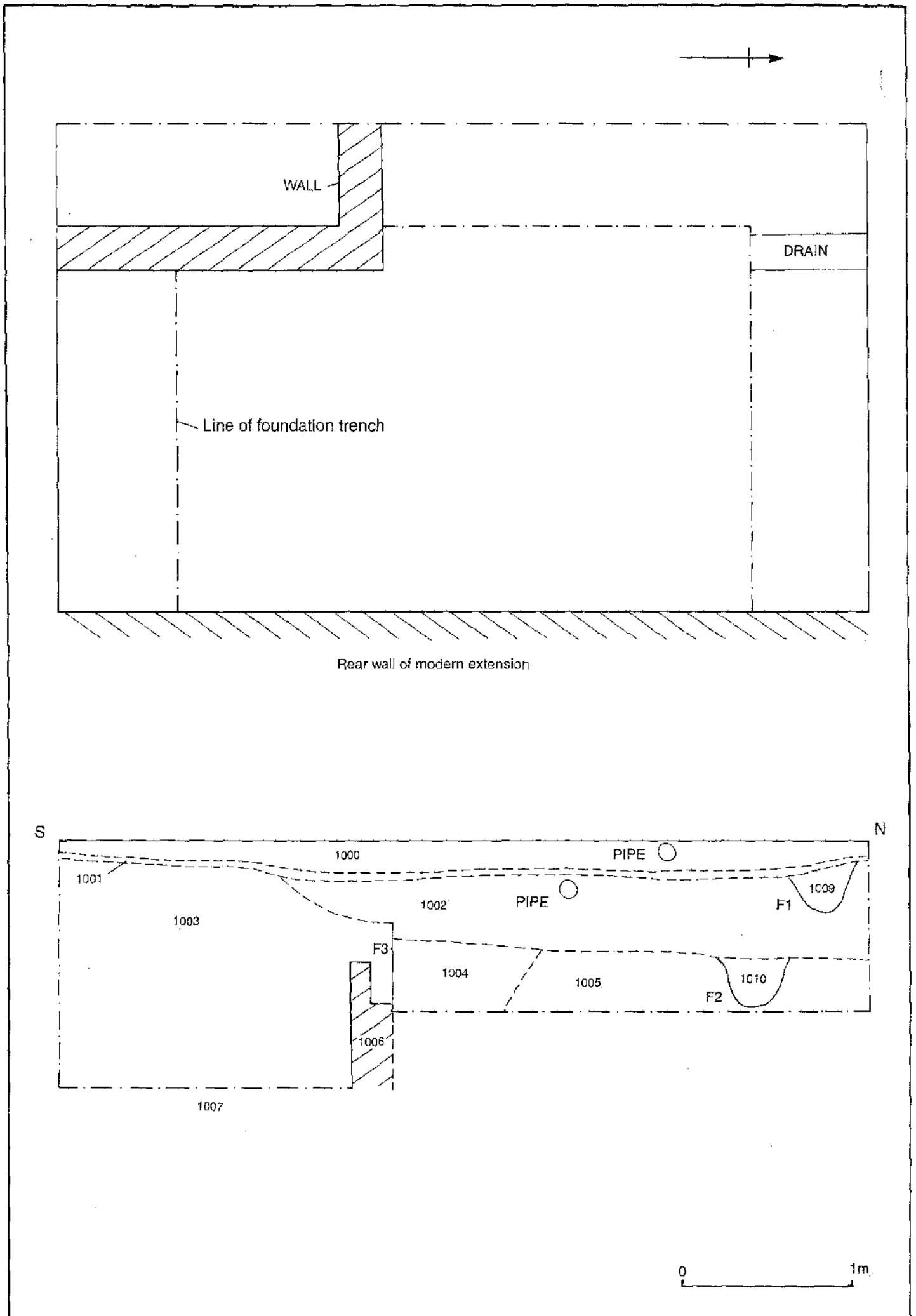


Fig.3