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**Mayhouse Farm, Hadley,
Worcestershire:
a programme of
archaeological work
2001**

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit



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a programme of archaeological work 2001**

NGR SO8656 6287

Site code: WSM 30946

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Contents

1.0 Summary	1
2.0 Introduction	1
3.0 Site Location	2
4.0 Objectives	2
5.0 Method	3
6.0 Archaeological and historical background	4
7.0 Results	6
8.0 The finds	11
9.0 Discussion	12
10.0 Acknowledgements	14
11.0 References	14

List of figures

1. Location map
2. Location of trenches, farm buildings and monument survey
3. Mayhouse Farm in 1829 (Ombersley Inclosure Map)
4. Mayhouse Farm in 1888 (Ordnance Survey 1st edn)
5. Mayhouse Farm in 1905 (Ordnance Survey 2nd edn)
6. Mayhouse Farm in 1930 (Ordnance Survey 3rd edn)
7. Plan of Trench 2
8. Plan of culvert F209 and F208
9. Section of ditch F206
10. Plan of F203, F204, F212 and F215
11. Plan of cow shed and cart shed
12. Plan of threshing barn and stables
13. Plan of Trench 1

List of plates

1. Cart shed from the southeast
2. Cow shed from the southwest
3. Bonding of stone and brick cow shed walls
4. Mortice for removed post in wall-plate of cowshed
5. Symbol on north front of cow shed
6. Junction of cartshed and cow shed
7. Cow shed window shutter
8. Weather boarding in cow shed
9. Threshing barn from the northwest
10. Threshing barn roof truss from the west
11. Stables from the east
12. Cart shed and granary, south block from the southwest
13. F204, F212 and F215 looking east
14. F203 and 2001 looking west
15. F209 looking north

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1.0 Summary

A programme of archaeological work was carried out in November and December 2001 by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) on behalf of Weather Ark Ltd at Mayhouse Farm, Hadley, Worcestershire (NGR SO8566 6287). The work was carried out as a condition of planning consent to convert a number of redundant farm buildings to residential use and to construct a new access drive. The proposed conversion will affect the farm buildings, which are registered on the County Sites and Monuments Record (WSM 29843), and may affect the remains of a number of other buildings (WSM 29844), now demolished. The route of the access drive is close to several earthworks (WSM 30134) thought to be associated with a group of fishponds referred to as the 'five stews' (WSM 29126) in documentary sources, and of probable medieval date.

The programme of archaeological work comprised a desk-based assessment, a monument survey, a metal detector survey and 'strip and record' of the route of the new access drive, followed by excavation. In addition, the farm buildings were recorded, a trench was excavated on the site of a demolished cottage and its ground plan was recorded. At the time of writing, a watching brief during the excavation of service trenches is still to be carried out.

A number of earthworks were recorded during the monument survey, including a hollow way and possible building platforms that may be of medieval date. Metalwork of post-medieval date was recovered during the metal detector survey along the route of the new access road. Although the excavations on the route of the new access drive revealed no definite medieval features, a significant amount of residual pottery of the period was recovered from late post-medieval features and layers. Late post-medieval features recorded include a drain and sandstone building foundations. These features were probably associated with a building that formed part of a complex of structures shown in this area on an early nineteenth century map. Other features recorded, including a ditch, a culvert, cobbled yard surfaces and trackways, were probably connected with eighteenth/nineteenth century farming activities. The demolished cottage probably dated to the seventeenth century, and the redundant farm buildings to the second half of the nineteenth century.

2.0 Introduction

In November and December 2001 Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) undertook a programme of archaeological work at Mayhouse Farm, Hadley, Worcestershire. The work was commissioned by Weather Ark Ltd as a condition of planning consent in connection with two planning applications, submitted to Wychavon District Council (W/00/12830 and W/01/01068). The development involved the conversion of redundant farm buildings into five residential units and the construction of a new access drive. The archaeological work was required by Wychavon District Council, on the advice of the Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Archaeological Service, on the grounds that the proposed development might affect sites registered on the Worcestershire Sites and Monuments Record as being of archaeological interest.

Two separate briefs prepared by Worcestershire Archaeological Service (WAS 2000 and WAS 2001) set out a staged archaeological programme. The first brief (WAS 2000)

concerned the conversion of the redundant farm buildings. The work required consisted of a desk-based assessment, recording of the redundant farm buildings (WSM 29843), excavation and recording on the site of a demolished cottage (WSM 29844), to the east of the farm buildings, and a watching brief during the excavation of service trenches.

The second brief (WAS 2001) concerned the construction a new access drive to bypass Mayhouse Farmhouse, the route of which passes close to several earthworks (WSM 30134). These earthworks are thought to be associated with a group of fishponds referred to as the 'five stews' (WSM 29126) in documentary sources, and are of probable medieval date. The archaeological work required comprised of a desk-based assessment, a monument survey, a metal detector survey and 'strip and record' of the route of the new access drive, followed by excavation.

In addition to conforming to the two Worcestershire Archaeological Service briefs, the work also adhered to two methods statements by BUFAU (BUFAU 2001a and 2001b). The work was carried out in accordance with the *Requirements and Guidance for Archaeological Projects in Worcestershire* and followed the guidelines set down in the standard and guidance notes prepared by the Institute of Field Archaeologists

This report describes all the archaeological work except the watching brief, which is to be undertaken at a later date, and which will be the subject of a separate report.

3.0 Site location

Mayhouse Farm (centred on NGR SO86566287) is located, approximately 3 km west of Droitwich, and approximately 2km southeast of Ombersley village within the civil parish of Ombersley, in the northeast corner of Worcestershire (Fig. 1). The site is situated on sloping ground, which falls away to the north and east towards Hadley Brook, which forms a tributary of the River Salwarpe. The site is divided from east to west by a road (Mayeux Lane) that serves the farm. On the south side of the lane lie (from east to west): the farmhouse (WSM 22520), the redundant agricultural buildings (WSM 29843), and the remains of the demolished cottage (WSM 29844). The earthworks (WSM 30134) and fishponds (WSM 29126) are on the north side of Mayeux Lane. The underlying geology is Keuper Marl, and immediately south lies an arm of Lower Keuper Sandstone (British Geological Survey, 1960).

4.0 Objectives

- To establish the likely presence of any archaeological deposits and features within the site.
- To define the nature, extent and significance of surviving deposits and features.
- In the case of the farm buildings, to record construction techniques, phases of development (and to assign dates where possible), functional and historical use and associations with surrounding buildings and landscape.
- To record the character, date and sequence of the demolished building.

These aims were achieved through a desk-based assessment, building recording and excavation, monument and metal detector surveys, and 'strip and record' excavation.

5.0 Method (Fig. 2)

5.1 Desk-based assessment

Documentary research of primary and secondary sources, including maps, was undertaken at Worcestershire County Record Office, and at the University of Birmingham. The Worcestershire County Sites and Monuments Record, the primary source of archaeological information for the county, was also consulted.

5.2 Monument survey

The monument survey was carried out using a Sokkisha total station logged into a field computer. The earthworks were recorded using conventional hachure techniques, and a contour model of the underlying land surface derived from spot heights.

5.3 Metal detector survey

The route of the access drive was surveyed by metal detector and the positions of finds marked for subsequent recovery or excavation according to estimated depth.

5.4 Strip and record

The route of the access drive was designed, in consultation with the Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Archaeological Service, to avoid significant earthworks. The route of the access drive was stripped mechanically using a JCB excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, operating under constant archaeological supervision. Modern overburden was removed to the depth at which archaeological features first appeared or, where archaeological features were not present, to the depth of the top of natural subsoil. Subsequent cleaning and sample excavation was carried out by hand. All deposits encountered were described fully on individual pro-forma context and feature recording cards. A drawn record was made of all significant features by section drawings and plans at respective scales of 1:10 and 1:20, supplemented by monochrome and colour slide photography. Recovered finds were retained by individual context and were cleaned, marked and subjected to remedial conservation work where necessary.

5.5 Building recording

The buildings were recorded by means of a written account, the collation and annotation of existing survey drawings, and the preparation of a phased plan of the building. In addition, a photographic record, on 35mm black-and-white and colour print format, was completed for all internal and external elevations, room spaces, roof structures, functional fixture details, features relating to the function and development of the building, and the buildings' relationship to surrounding structures and setting.

5.6 Excavation at the site of the demolished cottage

A single 'L'-shaped trench measuring 9m x 1.8m, on its north-south axis, and 6.5 x 1.8m, on its east-west axis, was opened using a JCB excavator, fitted with a toothless bucket and operating under archaeological supervision. The trench was excavated across the foundations of the demolished cottage, with the purpose of recording the character, date and sequence of the building. Recording was by section drawings and a plan at respective scales of 1:10 and 1:50, supplemented by monochrome and colour slide photography. In addition, the rest of the footings, where they survived, were exposed, and their outlines added to the plan.

6.0 Archaeological and historical background

6.1 Medieval

Ombersley was owned by Evesham Abbey between its foundation in the eighth century until the Dissolution, when it came into the possession of the Sandys family. A series of fish ponds, including a group known as the 'The five stues' were recorded *circa* 1600 in a book of grants for Ombersley Manor (Guyatt, 2000). They have been identified with a series of five ponds to the north of Mayhouse Farm (WSM 29126), that are clearly depicted on the Ombersley Inclosure Map of 1829 (Fig. 3), and on the Tithe Apportionment Map of 1840. Four of these lay within an irregularly shaped enclosure, aligned from east to west, parallel with the stream that fed them. The fifth pond lies immediately west of the enclosure, divided from it by a dam. These ponds are believed to be medieval in origin and to have been constructed in order to contribute towards the supply of fish for the Abbey. Earthworks, including possible building platforms and hollow ways (WSM 30134) lying to the south of the ponds, may represent the remains of a settlement connected with the management and harvesting of fish from the ponds.

Documentary sources and archaeological fieldwork have provided evidence for the settlement of the area around Mayhouse Farm, or Mayeux, as it was known in the Middle Ages and into the nineteenth century. Further earthworks of medieval type have been recorded in the surrounding fields. To the north is an enclosure (WSM23459), and, to the south, further enclosures (WSM23468 and WSM23469), a pit (WSM23467) and an arca of ridge and furrow (WSM23466).

The extent of the district of Mayeux is unknown, though by 1829 the name appeared to be confined to the land in the immediate vicinity of Mayhouse Farm (Ombersley Inclosure Award Map, 1829). Between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, however, it was certainly used in a looser sense to refer to a larger area. This 'greater' Mayeux contained a number of properties including 'Jenkyns' or 'Jenks,' as it came to be known, 'Gardeners' and 'Gentles', the last of which (WSM 22834) lay approximately 150m south of Mayhouse Farm. The site on which Mayhouse Farm now stands may have been occupied by the property known as 'Mayeux', which was in existence as early as 1277, when it comprised a messuage and a yardland. In 1471 William Sawndres was the tenant of Mayeux, and in 1541, Richard Saunders (Guyatt 2000).

6.2 Post-medieval

In 1606 Thomas Saunders owned Mayeux with a messuage and half yardland. He had a three-bay house, a three-bay barn, an orchard and enclosed pasture (*A Survey of Ombersley*,

1606, p.249). The Inclosure and Tithe maps show a series of individual buildings, or groups of buildings, on either side of the road. All those on the north side have now gone, but they included a dense cluster of buildings on the roadside, close to the route of the access drive, and a series of smaller structures immediately to the north. To the northwest, apparently facing onto the now vanished Brickhouse Orchard Road, which led northwards, was an isolated building within a large square enclosure. This may, perhaps, be identified with 'the homestead belonging to Samuel Sanders', close to which the Mayeux footpath to Hadley Heath Road began (Ombersley Inclosure Award, 1829).

To the south of the lane the redundant farm buildings that were the subject of the building recording do not appear on either of the two early maps, nor is there anything depicted on the site of the current Mayhouse Farmhouse. Instead, there is a rectangular enclosure opposite the settlement on the north side of the lane, with buildings ranged along its south and east sides. In addition, there is an 'L'-shaped building to the east standing within its own enclosure. This is the demolished cottage (WSM 29844), which was the subject of the excavation and recording described below.

By 1888, several changes had taken place. To the south of the road both Mayhouse Farmhouse (WSM 22520) and the now redundant farm buildings (WSM 29843) had come into existence. The latter were ranged around all four sides of the yard, which was entered, as now, from the north-east (Ordnance Survey 1st edition, Fig. 4). The cottage (WSM 29844) to the east remained unchanged. To the north of the road there had been extensive demolition, and the building pattern had become transmogrified into a rectangular building opposite Mayhouse Farmhouse, and a group of buildings ranged around the north, south and east sides of a square courtyard opposite the now redundant farm buildings. In addition, the property boundaries of 1829 to the south of the fishponds had disappeared.

By 1905 (Ordnance Survey 2nd edition, Fig. 5) the north range of the north complex had disappeared, the southern part of the redundant farm buildings' east range had gone, and a new rectangular building (the current hay barn) had been erected to the south-west on a north-north-west to south-south-east alignment. The cottage to the east of the farm buildings was still in existence by 1918 (Plan of Mayhouse Farm, 1918, reprinted from the Ordnance Survey map) but by 1930 (Ordnance survey 3rd edition, Figure 6) it had been demolished.

A sale catalogue dated 15th June 1918 describes the Mayhouse Farm property:

The House

Is Substantially Built of Brick on Stone Foundations and Roofed with Tiles. It stands high, and contains: In the Basement – Dairy and Wash House. On the Ground Floor – are Dining and Drawing Rooms, Kitchen with Closed range, and Back Kitchen with Four Bedrooms above. In No.1343 is a Pair of Brick and Tiled Cottages, Let with the Farm.¹

¹ These cottages are to be identified with Mayhouse Cottages, a pair of later nineteenth century dwellings that stand on the lane leading from Hadley Heath Road to Mayhouse Farm.

The Farm Buildings

Are conveniently arranged, Standing in the Centre of the Farm, and comprise: Nag Stable of One stall, One Loose Box and Loft, Cart Lodge and Granary over, Cattle Shed and Yard, Two Barns, one with Loft at end and Corn Store, Coal House, Four Piggeries, Stable for Five Horses, Harness Place and Hay Loft over, New Iron Five-Bay Hay Barn, Chaff and Mixing Places.'

7.0 Results

7.1 Monument survey

The survey of the field between the fishponds and the farm buildings recorded a number of features (Fig. 2), the principal earthwork being a particularly pronounced hollow way to the east of some demolished farm buildings (WSM29844). The hollow way climbs steeply southwards from the fishponds towards Mayeux Lane. Judging from the 1829 map it appears to have formed a branch of Mayeux Lane, skirting the east end of the fishpond enclosure on its way north. Immediately west of this monument are two irregularly shaped platforms. These platforms do not appear on the 1829 map.

Towards the western end of the survey area is a less prominent linear depression, which extends from the dam in the valley that forms part of the fishpond complex of earthworks. A small, roughly triangular platform lies approximately 10m to the west of it. A second, roughly rectangular platform lies behind the existing brick shed and granary opposite Mayhouse Farmhouse. The linear depression appears to be in the same position as a property boundary marked on the 1829 map, and the rectangular platform appears to have been occupied by the western extremity of the now demolished range of buildings that extended along the north side of Mayeux Lane. Nothing, however, is shown on the site of the triangular platform.

7.2 Metal detector survey

Large quantities of iron objects were recovered from the route of the access drive, with concentrations corresponding to the positions of a number of cobbled surfaces that were subsequently revealed during the strip and record stage. None of this ironwork was of particular significance; much was in the form of hand made nails, and the whole assemblage was of post-medieval date.

7.3 Strip and record

Trench 2 (Fig. 7)

The natural subsoil (2013) was a reddish brown clay. It was overlain by 0.30m of topsoil (2012) containing a worked flint, shell, sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery, a fragment of clay pipe stem, glass, iron nails and iron fragments. At the west end of the trench, was a linear feature (F208, Fig. 8), aligned north-south and cut into the natural subsoil. It was approximately 6m wide and 0.6m deep, with gently sloping sides and a flat base. The feature was filled with three contexts. At its base was a layer of cobbles within a red clay matrix (2027), 0.53m thick, containing sherds of post-medieval pottery, fragments of tile, a fragment of clay pipe stem and animal bone. Context 2027 was cut by a culvert (F209, Fig. 8, Plate 15)

with brick sides (2033 and 2034) and a cover of sandstone slabs (2029), on a similar alignment to F208. The silty fill (2032) within the culvert, contained sherds of post-medieval pottery, a clay pipe stem, an iron nail and animal bone. Overlying both 2027 and culvert F209 was a buff sand (2028), 0.02m deep, and another cobble layer in a sandy matrix (2024), 0.05m deep, containing sherds of post-medieval pottery and fragments of roof slate.

Towards the centre of the trench, was a north-south aligned linear feature (F213), 2.64m wide and 0.40m deep, with gently sloping sides and a flat base. It was filled with a coal-rich silty clay (2021) containing sherds of medieval pottery, an iron nail, animal bone and shell. This was overlain by a dark reddish brown silty clay fill (2037) containing sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery, a fragment of tile and considerable amounts of broken sandstone. Two small postholes (F207 and F216, not illustrated) were cut into context 2037. Posthole F207 was oval in shape, 0.21m x 0.26m and 0.16m deep. Posthole F216 was circular, 0.14m in diameter and 0.18m deep. Filling postholes F207 and F216 and sealing context 2037 was the upper fill of F213, a spread of cobbles in a sandy matrix (2014), 0.04m deep, containing sherds of post-medieval pottery and a fragment of tile.

Further east was a large northwest-southeast orientated ditch (F206, Fig. 9). This feature was excavated to a depth of approximately 1.10m prior to work ceasing, owing to safety reasons, before the bottom had been reached. It was 7.4m wide and had gently sloping sides. The earliest fill recorded was a grey silty sand (2026) containing sherds of post-medieval pottery, plaster and brick fragments. This was sealed by a brown sandy silt (2019) containing sherds of medieval pottery, fragments of tile and mortar, a compact red clay (2025), a grey brown sandy silt (2018) containing tile and brick fragments and a compact dark brown silty sand (2017) containing tile and post-medieval glass. Fill 2017 was overlain by a dark brown clayey sandy silt (2016) containing sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery, a clay pipe stem, tile, mortar, iron fragments, animal bone and sandstone fragments. Fill 2016 was sealed by a brown sand (2020) containing sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery, tile and sandstone fragments and a brown clayey sandy silt (2015) containing a sherd of post-medieval pottery.

Further to the east were the truncated remains of an 'L'- shaped drain (F203, Fig.10, Plate 14), cut into the natural subsoil (2013). It was aligned northeast-southwest and turned towards the north at its northeast end. Drain F203 was vertical sided, 0.74m wide and 0.16m deep, and was lined with red clay (2002) containing tile and animal bone and dressed sandstone blocks (2009), possibly reused, each up to 0.70m long by 0.15-0.18m high by 0.20m wide. It was filled with a dark brown clay silt (2011) containing animal bone. East of F203 was a circular posthole (F210), 0.15m in diameter and 0.15m deep, with steep sides and a flat base. It was filled with a brown silty clay (2030) containing a sherd of post-medieval pottery and fragments of tile.

Further to the east, extending beyond the south edge of excavations, were two parallel, northwest-southeast orientated, wall footings within vertical-sided construction trenches (F204 and F215, Fig 10, Plate13), 0.50m wide and 0.18m deep and 1.80m apart. Both wall footings were made of sandstone blocks (2005 and 2038), possibly reused, which were up to 0.85m long by 0.30m high and 0.30m wide. Linking the northern ends of F204 and F215 was an east-west orientated linear trench (F212), 0.50m wide and 0.08m deep, which is interpreted as a construction trench with the footings robbed out, associated with F204 and F214. It was filled with a brown silty clay (2036) containing sherds of post-medieval pottery and tile fragments. To the north of these features the natural subsoil sloped away steeply, and

was sealed by two silty clay layers (2022 and 2023), each 0.20m deep. Layer 2022 contained sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery, fragments of tile and plaster, fragments of clay pipe stem, iron nails, glass fragments and animal bone. Layer 2023 contained brick and tile, slag and an iron nail. Sealing F204 and F214, and slightly overlapping the south edge of drain F203, was a layer of cobbles within a dark brown silty clay matrix (2001 and 2007), forming a surface 0.05m thick, containing sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery, fragments of brick and tile, glass fragments, iron nails and animal bone.

At the east end of the trench was a spread of cobbles (2003), 0.05m thick, extending beyond the edge of excavations. It contained sherds of post-medieval pottery, fragments of tile, iron fragments and animal bone.

7.4 Building recording

The farm buildings (Fig. 2) stand on the south side of Mayeux Lane, and are arranged around a rectangular yard. An 'L'-shaped block of one build occupies the south and west sides (Fig. 12), and combines a threshing barn with cart shed, granary and stables. The north side of the yard is occupied by a single range of cowsheds (Fig. 11). The east side of the yard is partially enclosed by an east-facing cart shed that stands at the south-east corner of the north range. A number of windows have been inserted or enlarged, all, apparently, with an automatic stone cutting tool, during the late twentieth century.

The cart shed (Fig. 11, Plate 1)

The mid-nineteenth century cart shed on the east side of the yard has been renovated during the mid-twentieth century. It is built of dressed sandstone blocks with irregular herringbone pattern tooling; plain tile roof. One storey, three bays. Brick (9"x 4¼"x 3¼") internal walls, and twentieth century roof on steel girders.

The cow sheds (Fig. 11, Plate 2)

Stratigraphically later than the cart shed are the cow sheds of the north range, which date from the late nineteenth century, and were later modified during this period. They are built largely of sandstone blocks, similar in character to those of the cart shed, though there is also some later red brickwork on the south elevation. Hipped clay tile roof. One storey, eleven roof bays in length divided into two sheds of four (west) and six (east) by a feed preparation bay that is defined by stone transverse walls. A continuous feed passage extends along the north side of the building, and has access doorways at the east and west ends, and to the north, into the feed preparation bay. Feeding trough to the north and manure channel to the south. Cattle entrances to the south, one to the west shed, and two to the east shed, each flanked by a pair of windows. *The south elevation* incorporates some archaeology, which demonstrates that the present form of the building is the result of modification. The left-hand bay is in stone and contains an original window, now barred. The next three bays to the right are brick (9"x 4½"x 3"), built in English Garden wall bond, and contain one doorway and flanking windows. The rest of the south front is also brick (9"x 4¼"x 2¾") in a similar bond, but stratigraphically later in date, and pierced by two doorways and flanking windows. All these windows, in both phases of brickwork, have been enlarged by lowering the sills. The brickwork has been bonded into the ends of the sandstone transverse walls that define the feed preparation bay. A timber wall plate, carried by these walls, indicates that prior to being built up in brick, this elevation was open fronted, the wall plate being supported by morticed

and pegged timber posts at the positions of the roof trusses (Plate 4). The posts stood on stone or brick pads, and there were stone foundations to the stone west end bay, and a stone threshold to the feed preparation bay. When the bays were infilled with brick, the gaps in the foundations were filled with more stone of similar character. The *north elevation* is pierced by an original doorway to right of centre, and by inserted windows to left, right, and right of centre. An interesting but enigmatic feature is a triangle carved on one of the stones of the upper west corner (Plate 5). It is apparently some kind of mason's mark though its purpose is obscure. The *east wall* butts against the cart shed to the south, showing that the cowshed is later (Plate 6). *Interior*: Wooden top hinged window shutters (Plate 7). Mainly concrete floors and troughs, though some brick flooring survives in both sheds. King post roofs; the king posts being jointed and pegged into the tie beams rather than bolted; they support one pair of purlins and a plank ridge piece. Above the stone walls of the feed preparation bay, the roof construction is different; tie beam trusses with truncated rafters, and a short king post standing on a collar holds the plank ridge. These trusses are covered with weather boarding towards the cowsheds (Plate 8).

The south block (Fig. 12)

The south block dates from *circa* 1850. It is built of red bricks (9"x 4¼"x 2¾") in Flemish stretcher bond, on a high plinth of dressed sandstone blocks with irregular herringbone pattern tooling; it has hipped clay tile roofs.

The five-bay threshing barn (Plate 9) fills the entire southern side of the yard; it has two threshing floors (bays two and four) entered from both sides of the building. One storey with dentilled caves course originally, but subsequently modified by the insertion of lofts. Two full height carriage entrances under elliptical arches with two tiers of brick voussoirs springing from plain stone responds. Small rectangular ventilation loops to the stonework, and small square vents to the brickwork. Inserted window openings to ground floor right and centre on the north elevation, and to ground and first floor right, left and centre on south elevation. The east elevation has an inserted doorway to the ground storey and an inserted window opening above. The doorway and some of the windows are framed with reused timbers. *Interior*: Twentieth century concrete floor. Short lengths of walling demarcate the bay divisions and support the roof trusses. The latter are constructed of machine cut timbers; queen posts are bolted to the tie beams and support the ends of the truncated principals; the queen posts are linked by a collar which carries a short king post that in turn supports a plank ridge piece (Plate 10).

The stables (Plate 11) face the yard (east) and have a lower roofline than the barn. Two stories; stables at ground level and hayloft above. Three bays; central doorway with collapsed arch and plank door with leaf-head strap hinges; two flanking windows with segmental heads. Upper storey blind. The rear (west) elevation has three inserted window openings to ground storey and two original hayloft windows. Another entrance, with segmental head, board door and plain strap hinges is situated at the north end of the building. *Interior*: Brick floor, with drainage gully extending along the east side of the building in line with the north entrance. At the south end only there is an area of cobbling. Traces only of wooden stalls on the west side. A wooden harness hook survives in the south wall. Three massive transverse beams provide evidence that there was a loft over the stable; these are jointed to carry joists, a few of which survive. King post roof trusses, the king posts bolted to the tie beams. They support a single pair of purlins and a plank ridge piece.

A cart shed (Plate 12) occupies the end bay of the barn range and faces towards the west. Two stories; cart shed below and granary above. Two blocked cart entrances at ground level with single wooden lintel beam supported on a central brick and stone pillar. Central granary window opening above. A doorway, dating from the time of the blocking, is immediately to the right (south) of the pillar, and there is a window in the left-hand (north) bay. The alteration may represent conversion into a loose box. On the south side is the loft entrance.

The map evidence suggests a date for all the farm buildings of between 1840 and 1888. In addition, a relative chronology is suggested by the character of the roof trusses. Those of the north range are typologically earlier, in that the main vertical members are jointed into the tie beam rather than being bolted, like those of the south-west block. In the neighbouring county of Staffordshire this structural development is believed to have taken place *circa* 1820 and to have spread rapidly thereafter (Peters, 1988, p.29). A date of soon after 1840 for the north range, and a slightly later date for the south-west block would not, therefore, seem unreasonable. The variations in the character of the roof trusses within the south-west block may be explained by function. The barn trusses were designed to provide less of an obstacle to the filling the bays adjacent to the threshing floors (Peters, 1988, p.24).

7.5 Excavation at the site of the demolished cottage

The excavation on the site of the demolished cottage (Fig. 13) revealed the footings of the north and south walls of the main range (F101 and F103), the west wall of the wing (F104). The position of the demolished east wall of the wing could be projected from the position of a corner stone. The south and west walls were both composed of large dressed sandstone blocks, some of which bore herringbone pattern tooling. At least one of the stones in the south wall was reused, having a dressed and rebated upper face. Whilst the lower course of the north wall was of stone, the uppermost courses were of handmade brick (9½" x 4¼" x 2¼"), probably seventeenth century in date. The excavation did not reveal a construction trench for the footings, and they appear to have been set directly on top of an artificial platform composed of redeposited clay (1002). An oval pit (F105) 0.90m x 1.15m x 0.15m deep, was cut into 1002, between F101 and F102. Pit F105 was filled with brick rubble (1001). Approximately 0.4m to the north of the north wall F101, and extending parallel with its entire length, was a line of stones placed on edge (F102). A dark humic fill (1000) containing sherds of post-medieval pottery, tile, fragments of glass and iron, was contained by F101 and F102, and is probably to be identified with garden soil; and it seems likely that the resultant feature was a flowerbed.

The house was 'L'-shaped in plan, comprising a main range aligned east-west, and an east wing aligned north-south, projecting to the south. At the east end of the main range, immediately to the west of, and structurally independent of, the cross wall, is the stone foundation for a chimneystack with a large open fireplace heating the main range. There are no internal divisions within the main range, suggesting that if the foundations reflect the superstructure, then the range must have comprised a single room at ground level 9m x 5.20m. However, partially exposed footings at the west end of the house may indicate a second chimney stack. If this is so, then the main range must have been divided for a heated parlour.

The foundations of the wing show that it was divided into two rooms, and that the line of communication between the two components of the building was on the south side of the chimneystack. However, the line of the south wall of the main range continues through the

wing, and it is possible, though not proven, that the house was originally rectangular in plan, and that the effect of the cross-wing was created by the addition of an extension to the east end of the south front.

The continuous nature of the flowerbed on the north side of the house suggests that the entrance was on the south side. This view is supported by the 1829 map on which the building appears to be orientated towards the south. A likely position for the entrance is in the angle between the main range and the wing, opposite the chimneystack, to form a lobby entry plan. This would have allowed independent access to the wing and to the hall or 'house' within the main range.

A tentative interpretation of the footings, therefore, might be that the house was built in the seventeenth century, as a three-unit lobby entry plan range, with central hall, western parlour and eastern service room(s), and that this was converted into an 'I.'-shaped building by the addition of an extension to the south side of the service bay. It is probable that the superstructure was of timber framing.

8.0 The Finds

8.1 Pottery by Annette Hancocks

A total of twenty-eight residual sherds of medieval pottery was recovered from Trench 2, at the site of the new drive, the majority of which derived from the topsoil. However, ten sherds were recovered from ditch F206 (2016, 2019 and 2020.) This residual material dated to the twelfth-fourteenth century AD and was associated with pottery of eighteenth/nineteenth century date that included pearlware, blackware and trailed slipware. All of this pottery showed little sign of weathering or abrasion, which may imply that the ditch was backfilled in a single episode.

Table 1: Quantification of finds

Feature	Context	Description	Date range
	2001	7x tile; 3x brick; 8x medieval pot; 3x post-medieval pot; 1x nail; 3x other iron and animal bone (599g)	18 th /19 th century with residual 12 th -14 th century AD
F203	2002	2x tile and animal bone (1g)	Post-medieval
	2003	3x tile; 2x post-medieval pot and 3x other iron	18 th /19 th century
	2007	14x tile; 2x brick; 4x medieval pot; 3x post-medieval pot; 2x bottle glass; animal bone (306g) and 1x charcoal fragment.	19 th /20 th century with residual 12 th -14 th century AD
F203	2011	Animal bone (104g)	
	2012	12x tile; 2x medieval pot; 26x post-medieval pot; 1x clay pipe; 19x iron nails; 14x other iron; 1x bottle glass; 1x miscellaneous glass; 1x flint and 1x shell	18 th -19 th century with residual 12 th -13 th century
F213	2014	1x tile and 14x post-medieval pot	18 th -19 th century AD
F206	2015	1x post-medieval	Modern
F206	2016	21x tile; 2x mortar; 5x medieval pot; 3x post-medieval pot; 1x clay pipe; 3x other iron and animal bone (1g)	18 th /19 th century with residual 12 th -13 th century AD
F206	2017	4x tile and 2x miscellaneous glass	Post-medieval
F206	2018	3x tile	Post-medieval

F206	2019	7x tile; 2x mortar and 4x medieval pot	11 th -12 th century AD
F206	2020	2x tile; 1x medieval pot and 2x post-medieval pot	19 th century with residual 11 th -12 th century AD
F213	2021	1x medieval pot; 1x iron nail; animal bone (61g) and shell (3g)	13 th -14 th century AD
	2022	9x tile; 2x plaster; 2x medieval pot; 12x post-medieval pot; 2x clay pipe; 1x iron nail; 2x miscellaneous iron; 1x bottle glass and animal bone (4g)	18 th /19 th century with residual 12 th -14 th century
	2023	8x tile; 5x brick; 1x iron nail and 1x slag	Post-medieval
F208	2024	2x post-medieval pot and 1x slate	19 th /20 th century AD
F206	2026	1x post-medieval pot	18 th /19 th century AD
F208	2027	3x tile; 4x post-medieval pot; 1x clay pipe; animal bone (273g) and shell (17g)	18 th /19 th century AD
F210	2030	3x tile and 1x post-medieval pot	Post-medieval
F209	2032	1x post-medieval pot; 1x clay pipe; 1x iron nail and animal bone (1g)	19 th /20 th century AD
F212	2036	1x tile and 1x post-medieval pot	18 th /19 th century AD
F213	2037	1x tile; 3x medieval pot and 2x post-medieval pot	18 th /19 th century with residual 12 th -13 th century AD
	1000	3x tile; 1x post-medieval pot; 2x miscellaneous iron and 1x miscellaneous glass	18 th /19 th century AD
	U/S	7x post-medieval pot; 1x miscellaneous iron and 2x miscellaneous glass	Post-medieval

8.2 *The animal bone* by Emily Murray

A small collection, c. 2kgs, of hand-collected animal bone was recovered from the archaeological investigations at Mayhouse Farm. The contexts have been phased based on the pottery assessment. All of the faunal material derives from contexts of post-medieval date, although residual medieval material was also represented. The animal bone assemblage is therefore of little archaeological interest given this recent date range, the possibility of residuality and the small quantity of material involved. However, it is perhaps worth noting that no unusual species or elements were represented and that the range of animals identified are cattle, sheep/goat, pig, rabbit and deer (antler). No further work is recommended for this assemblage.

9.0 Discussion

9.1 *Medieval*

The recovery of a significant amount of residual medieval pottery from Trench 2 provides artefactual evidence for medieval activity within the vicinity of Mayhouse Farm. The excavation produced no direct evidence of medieval settlement. However, some of the earthworks recorded during the monument survey, to the north of Trench 2, may be settlement features of medieval date. The hollow way, towards the eastern end of the study area, may represent a thoroughfare. The two platforms to the west of the hollow way are possibly building platforms.

9.2 Post-medieval development

There is little doubt that the cobble filled Feature F208 at the west end of the Trench 2 represents the lane marked on the 1829 map as Brick House Orchard Road. It ran northwards from Mayeux Lane, turning to the northwest at the western extremity of the westernmost fishpond. Other cobble-filled features and cobble spreads probably represent yards and pathways probably connected with eighteenth/ nineteenth century farming activities. The postholes F207, F210 and F216 may also related to these activities and are probably of a similar date.

Ditch F206 seems to correspond with a linear depression recorded during the monument survey, and with a property boundary shown on the 1829 map, both of which appear to emanate from, or gravitate towards, the dam defining the western fishpond. The ditch is of nineteenth century date, though its apparent relationship with the fishponds suggest that it might have had earlier origins.

The structural features F204, F212 and F215, towards the eastern end of Trench 2, are probably the remains of footings for a building of eighteenth or nineteenth century date, possibly of timber framed construction. This building formed part of the complex of structures shown in this area on the 1829 map.

9.3 Aspects of vernacular architecture

An interesting characteristic of the buildings was the use of dressed sandstone blocks. This material was found in the lower courses of the nineteenth century farmhouse and contemporary farm buildings, and in the wall footings of the demolished cottage revealed in Trench 1 and the footings uncovered in Trench 2. The herringbone tooling is distinctive, and appears to be a feature of the local vernacular (other examples are to be found within the parish). At Mayhouse Farm, the date range for the working of the stone is obscured by the evidence for reuse in both the farm buildings and in the foundations of the cottage. There is, however, no reason to suppose that any of this material is medieval in date, and the most convincing parallels for the tooling patterns come from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries.

The farm buildings, dated as they are, from between 1840 and 1888, provide valuable dating evidence for the end of the vernacular timber framed tradition. Between the construction of the cowhouse, on the one hand, and the rest of the complex on the other, timber framing proper, based on traditional carpentry techniques, with pegged joints, had been superseded by machine cut timbers and metal bolts. Indeed, it is in the roof trusses of the cowhouse that this change first manifests itself. On the evidence of the Mayhouse Farm buildings, then, the timber-framed tradition in Worcestershire can be said to have survived down to 1840, though by 1888 it had been extinguished.

The use of weather boarding to cover the two roof trusses over the feed preparation bay walls is interesting, in view of these being internal trusses. There is no reason to suppose that these were anything other than internal features, and they probably represent the adoption of a local vernacular external wall cladding technique for an unusual purpose. Although often associated with the south-east of England, weather boarding was certainly used in the West Midlands for cladding timber-framed farm buildings, and this example contributes to our understanding of its chronology.

10.0 Acknowledgements

The monument survey was carried out by Glynn Barratt with the assistance of Malcolm Hislop. The rest of the fieldwork was supervised by Malcolm Hislop assisted by Richard Cherrington, Mary Duncan, Erica Macey and Helen Martin. This report was written by Malcolm Hislop with contributions by Annette Hancocks and Emily Murray and was edited by Laurence Jones, who also managed the project. The figures were prepared by Nigel Dodds.

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1930 Ordnance Survey 3rd edition

1960 British Geological Survey 1:50000, Sheet 182 (Droitwich)

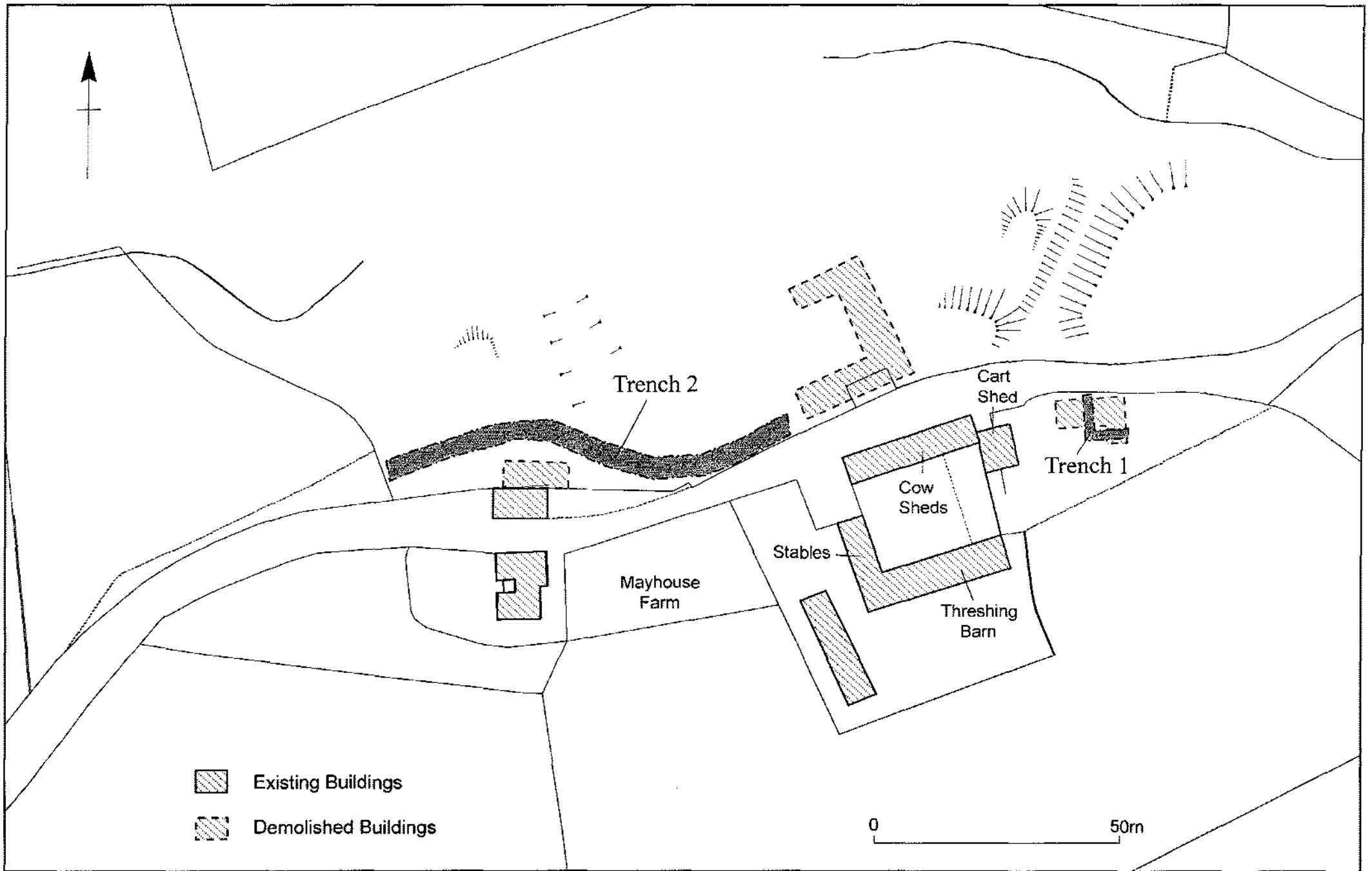


Fig.2

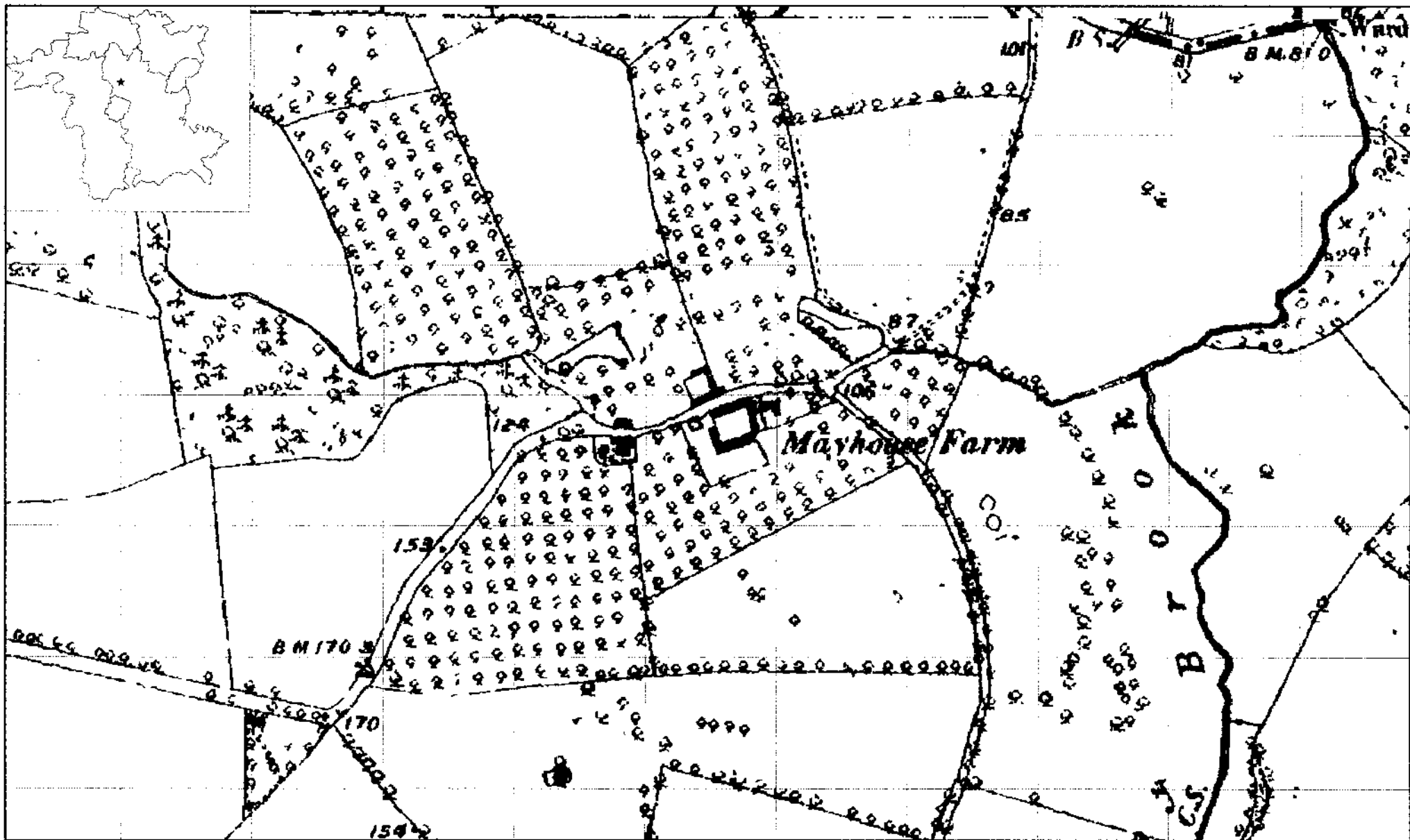


Fig.4 (1888)

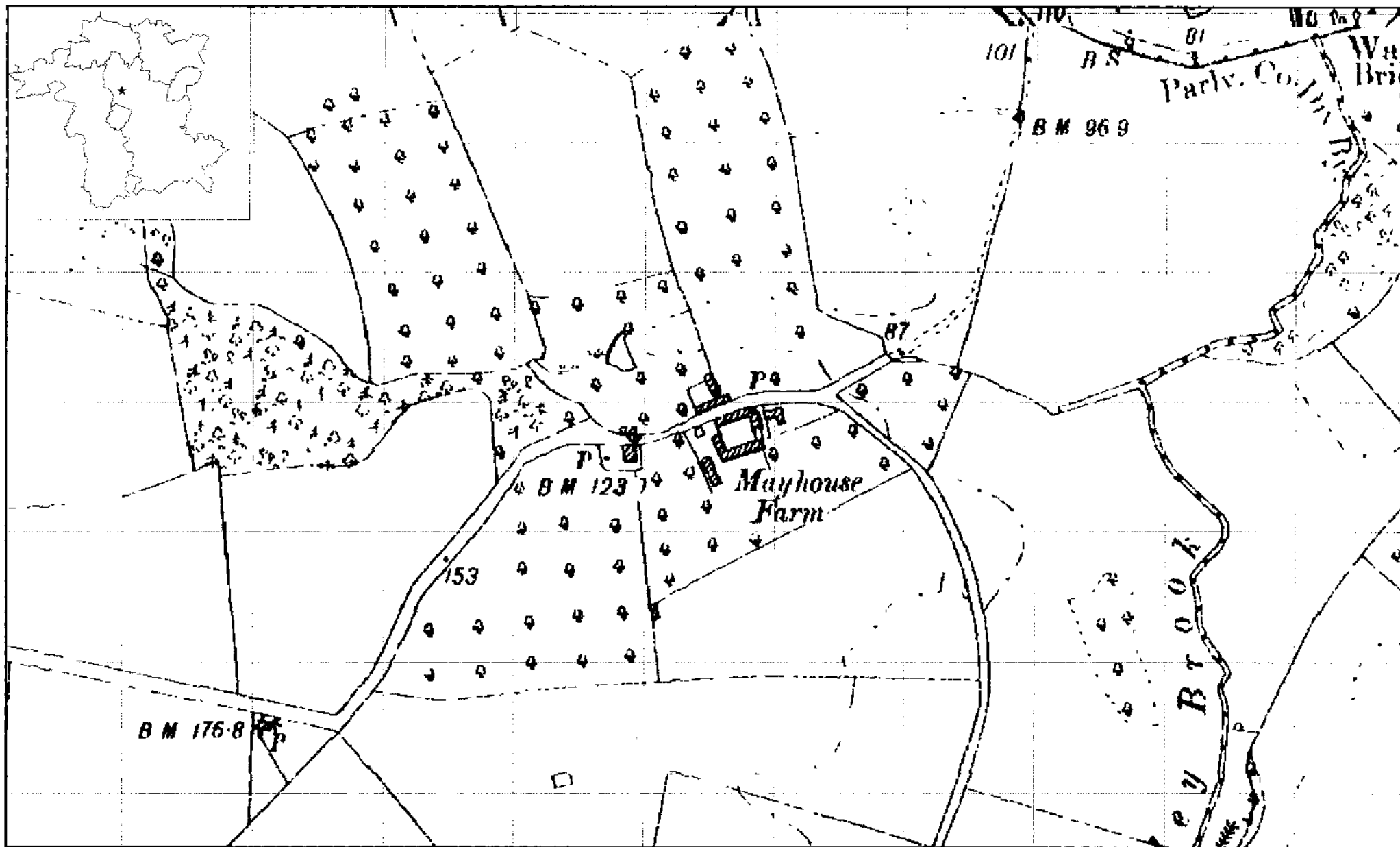


Fig.5 (1905)

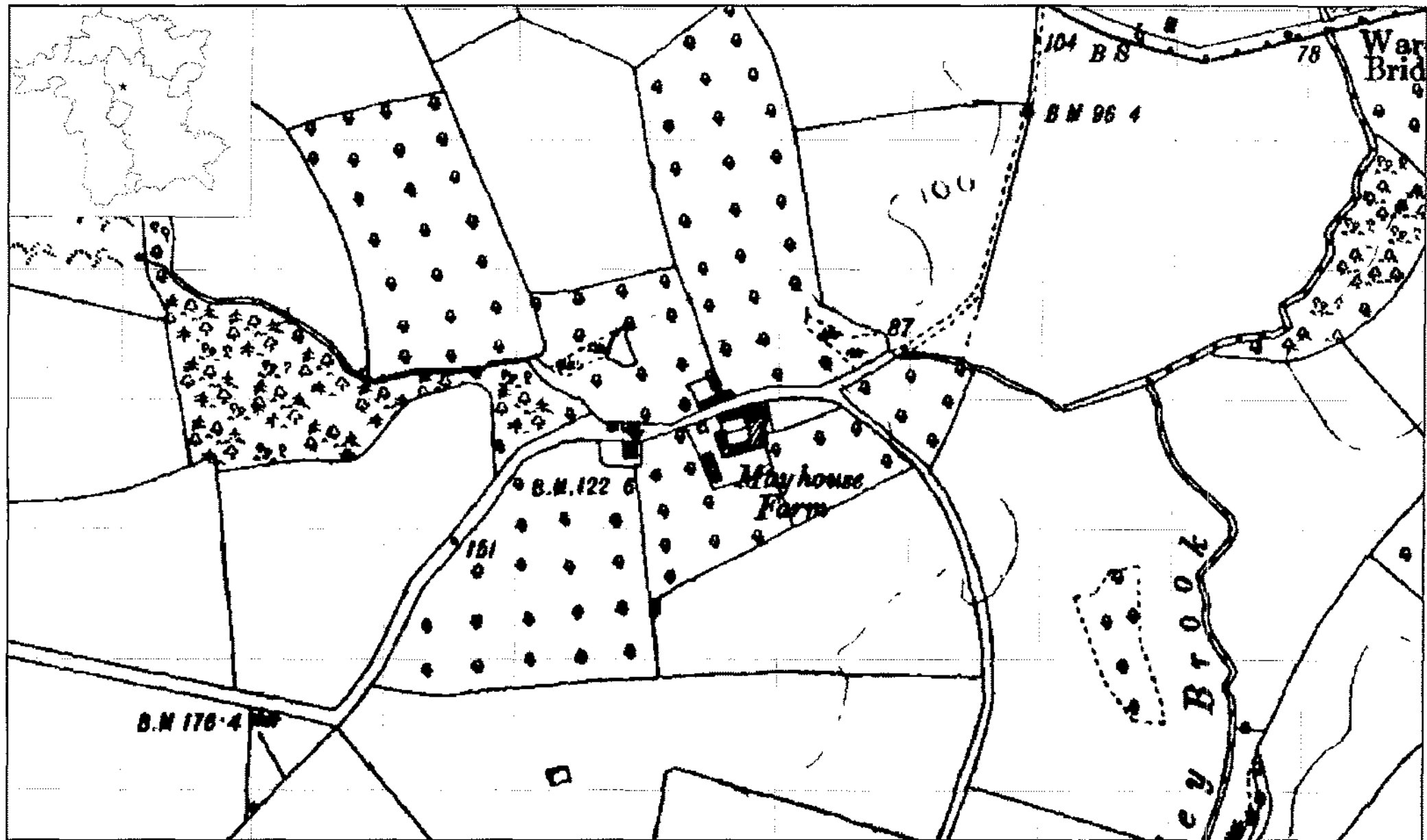


Fig.6 (1930)

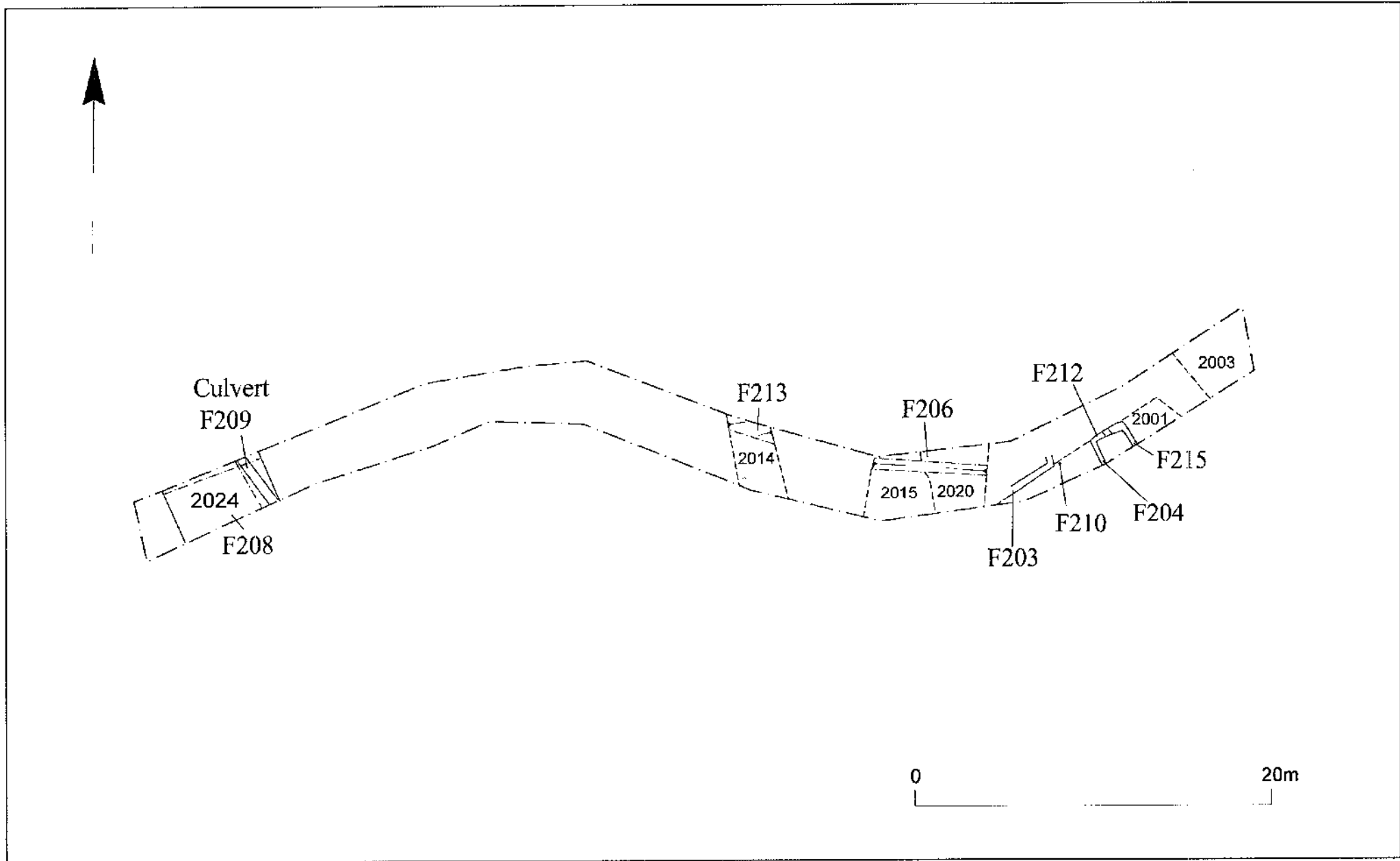


Fig.7

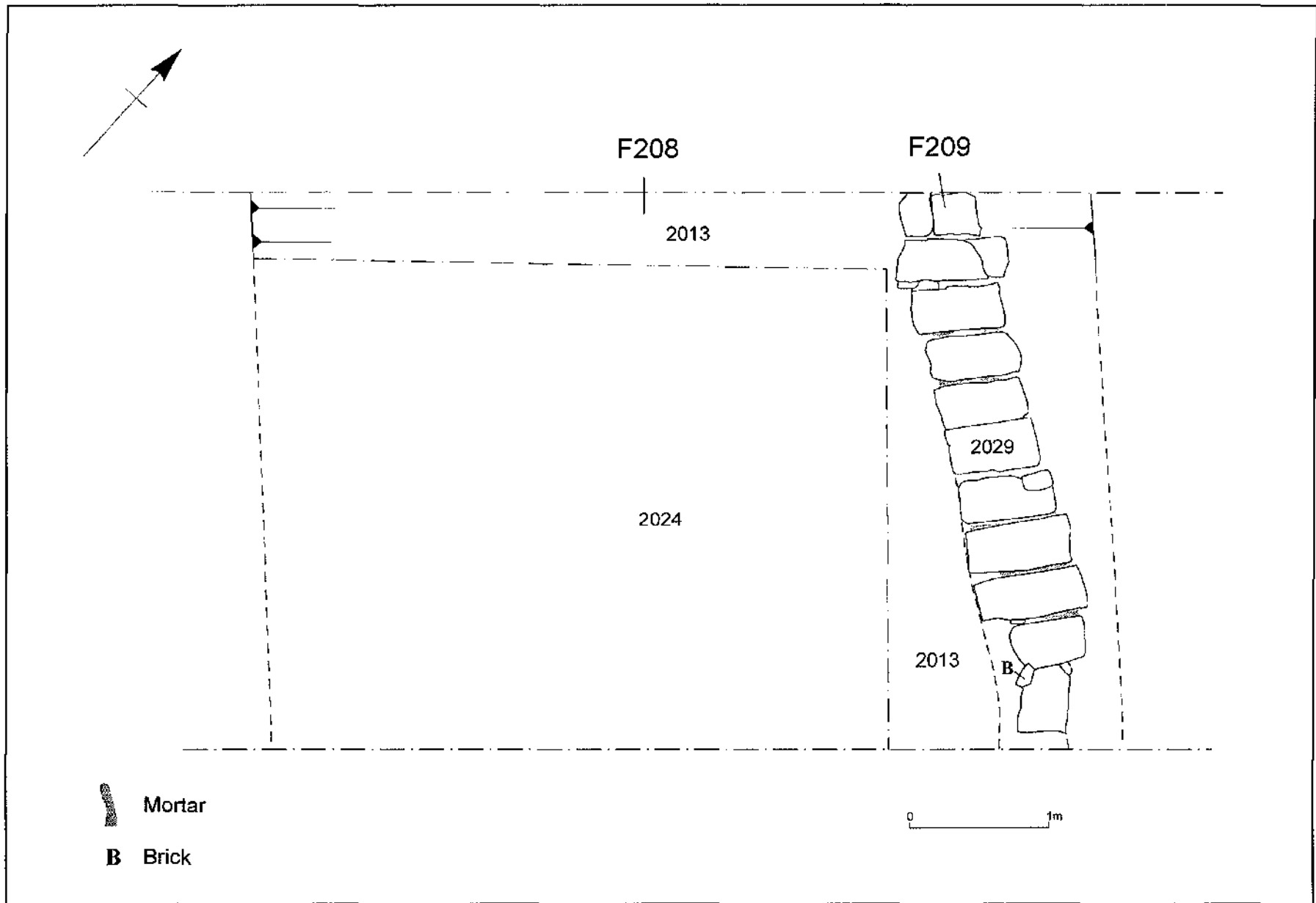


Fig.8

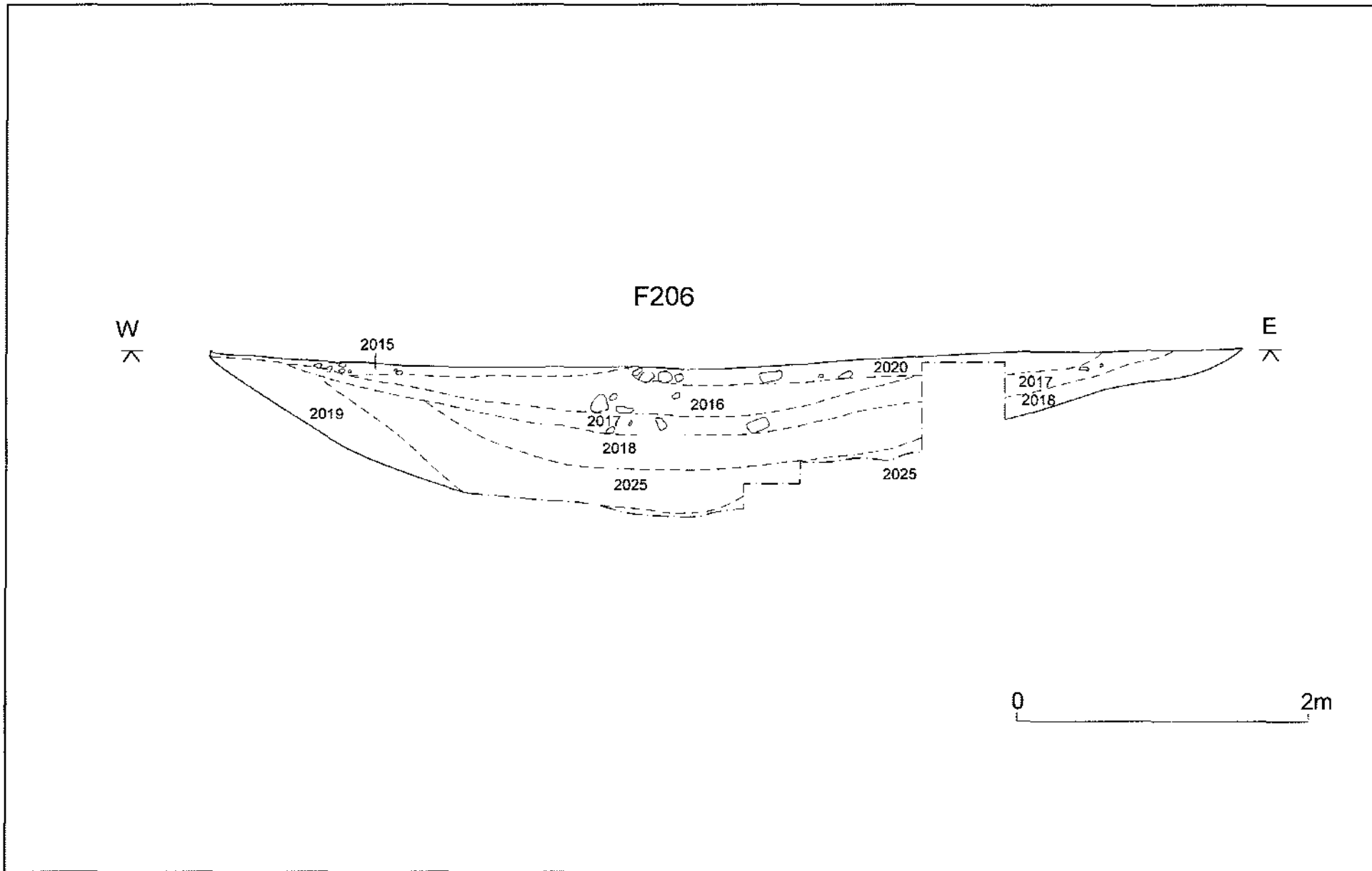


Fig.9

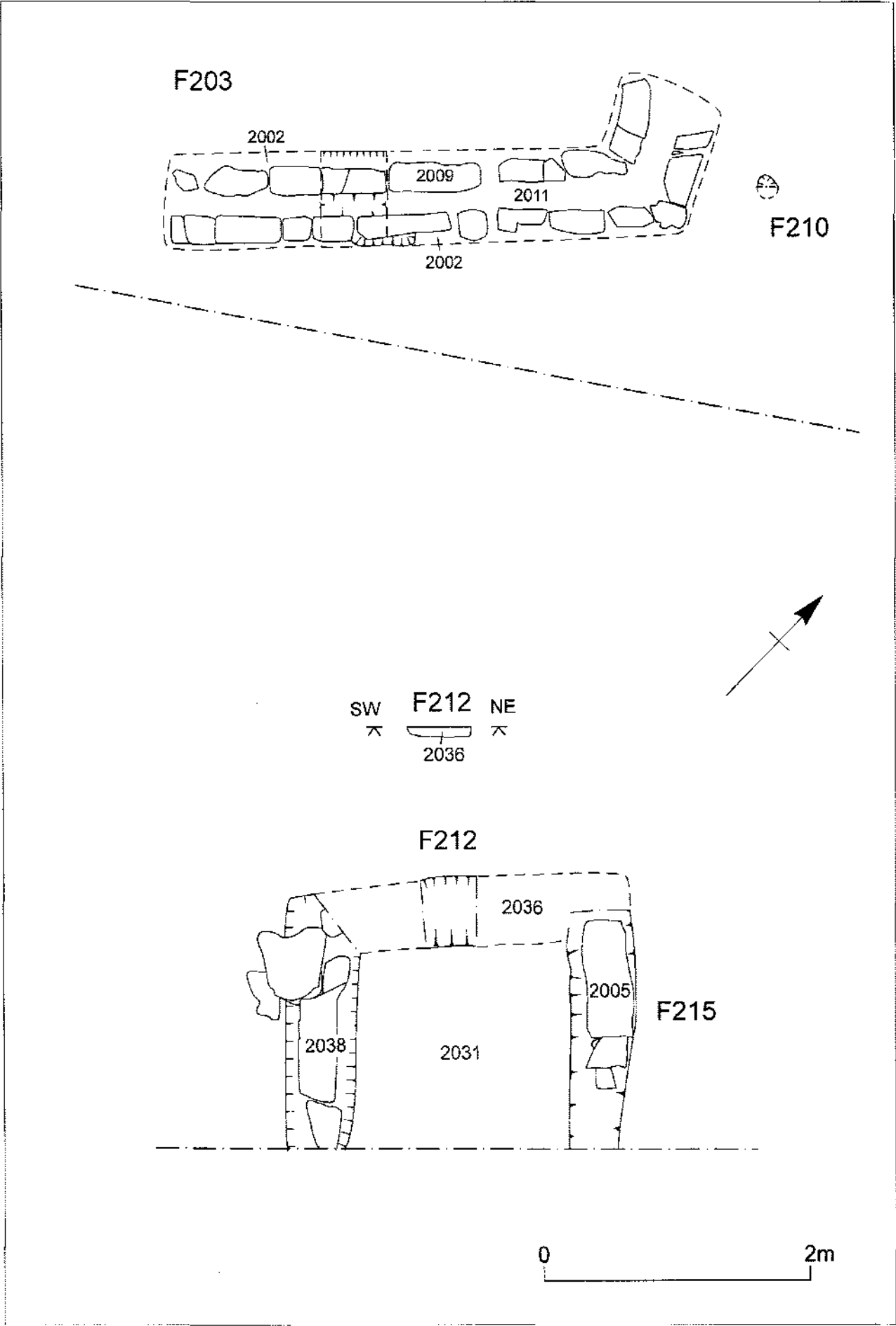


Fig.10

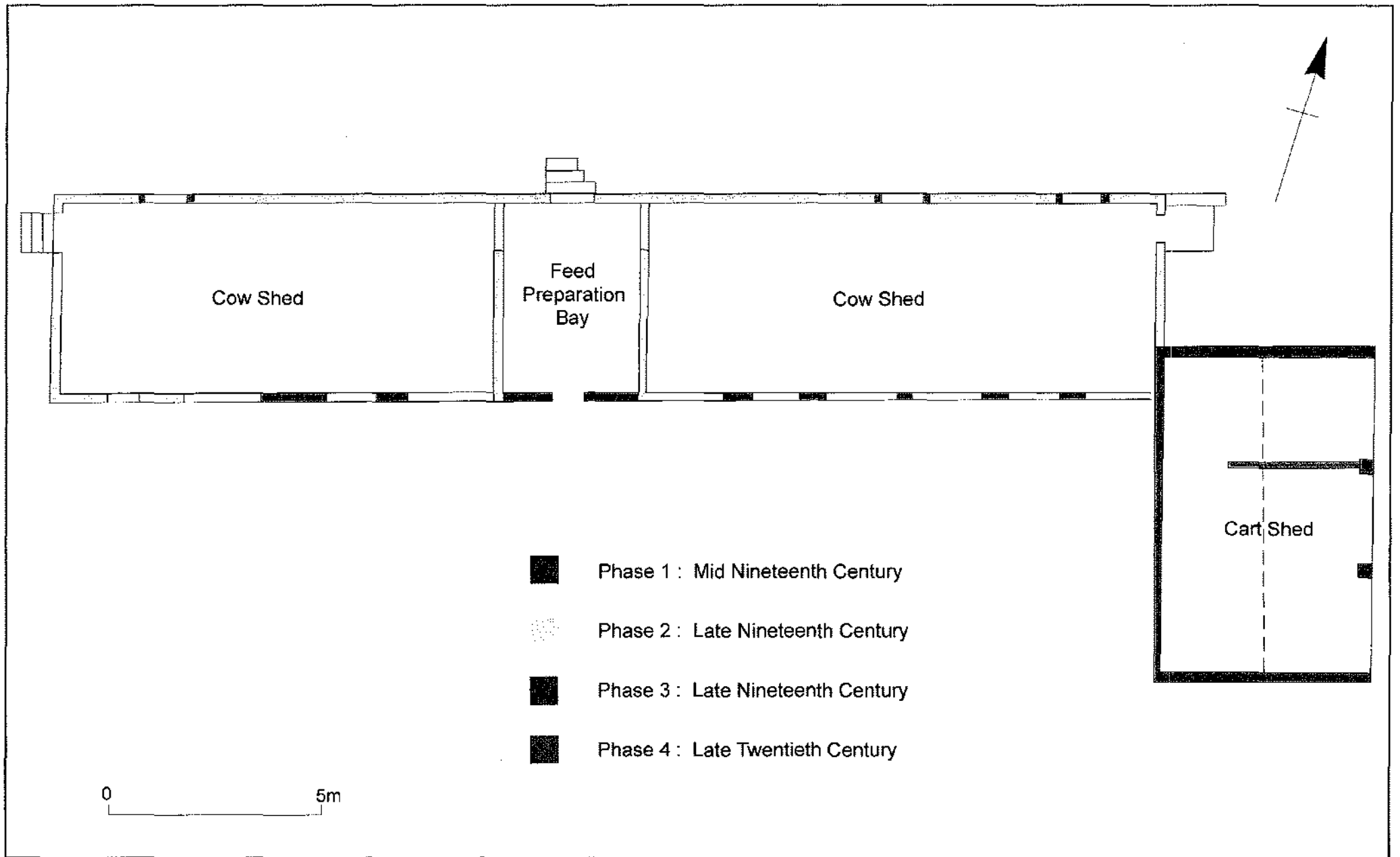


Fig.11

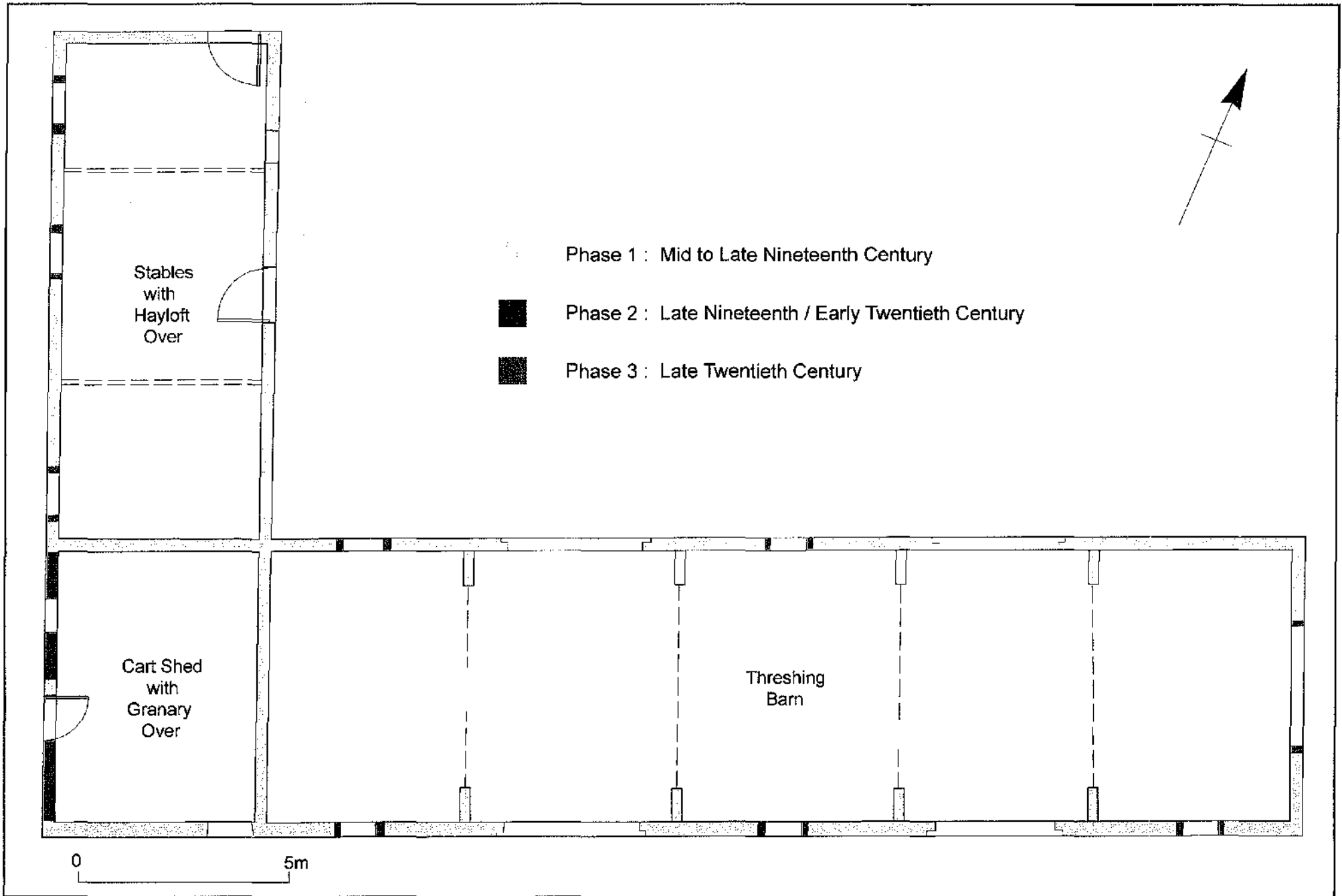


Fig.12

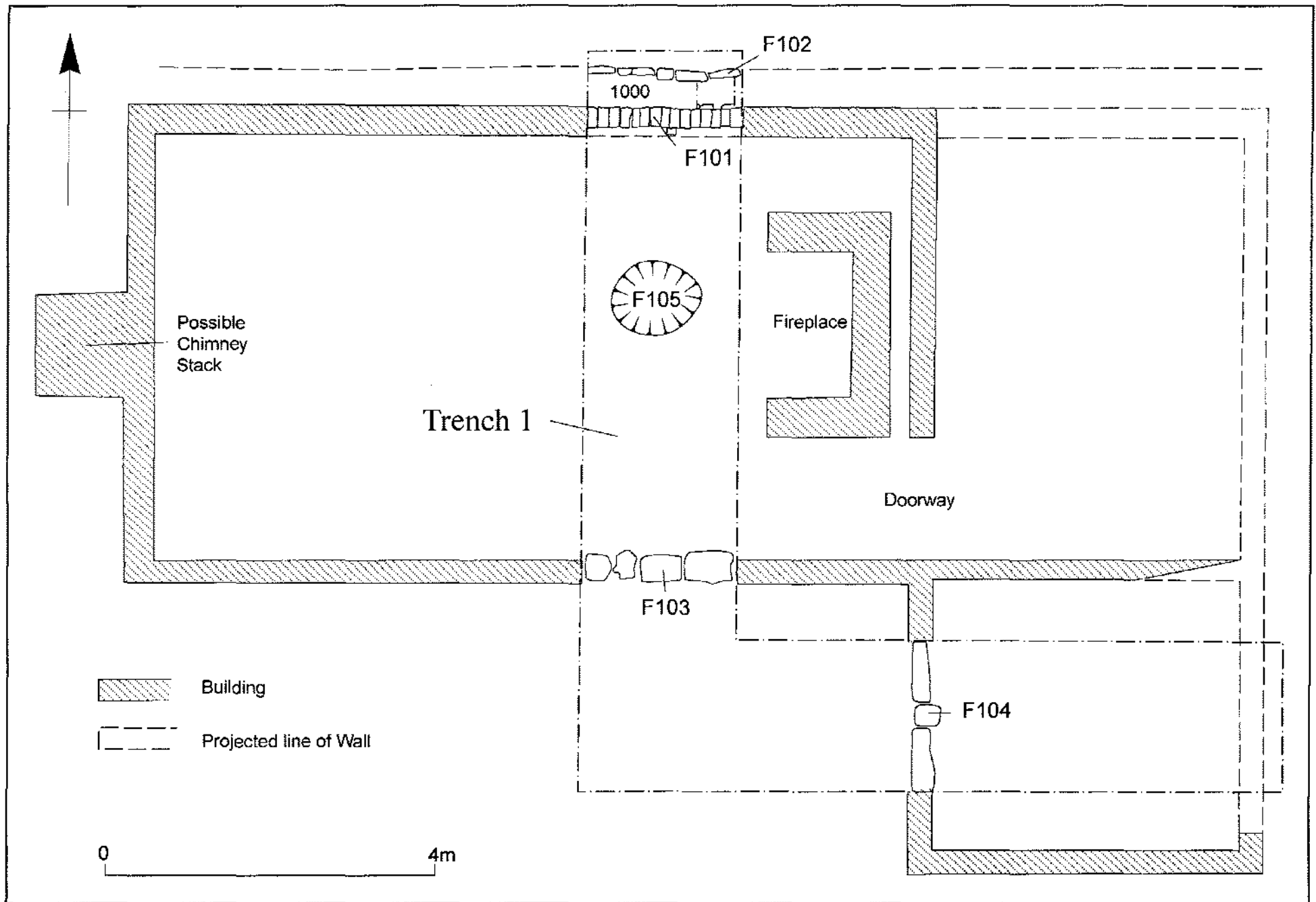


Fig.13



Plate 1



Plate 2

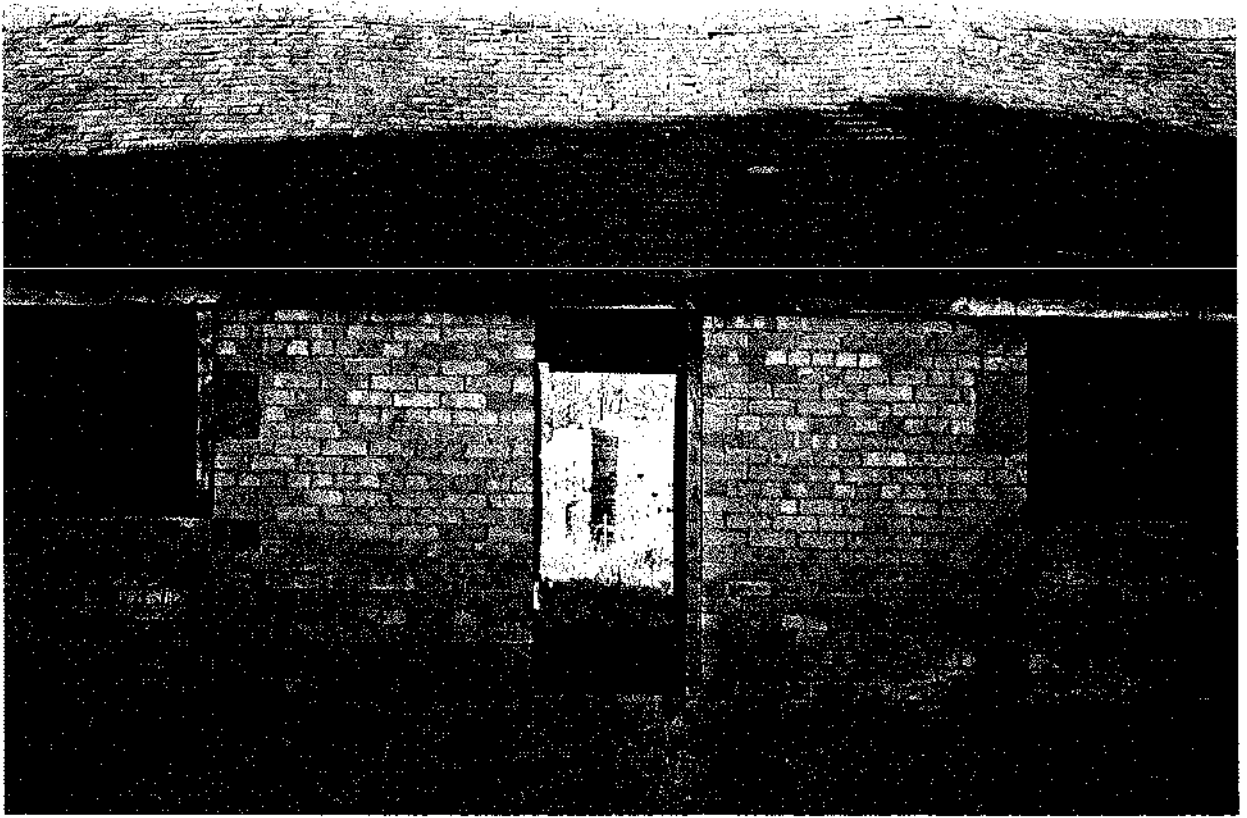


Plate 3



Plate 4

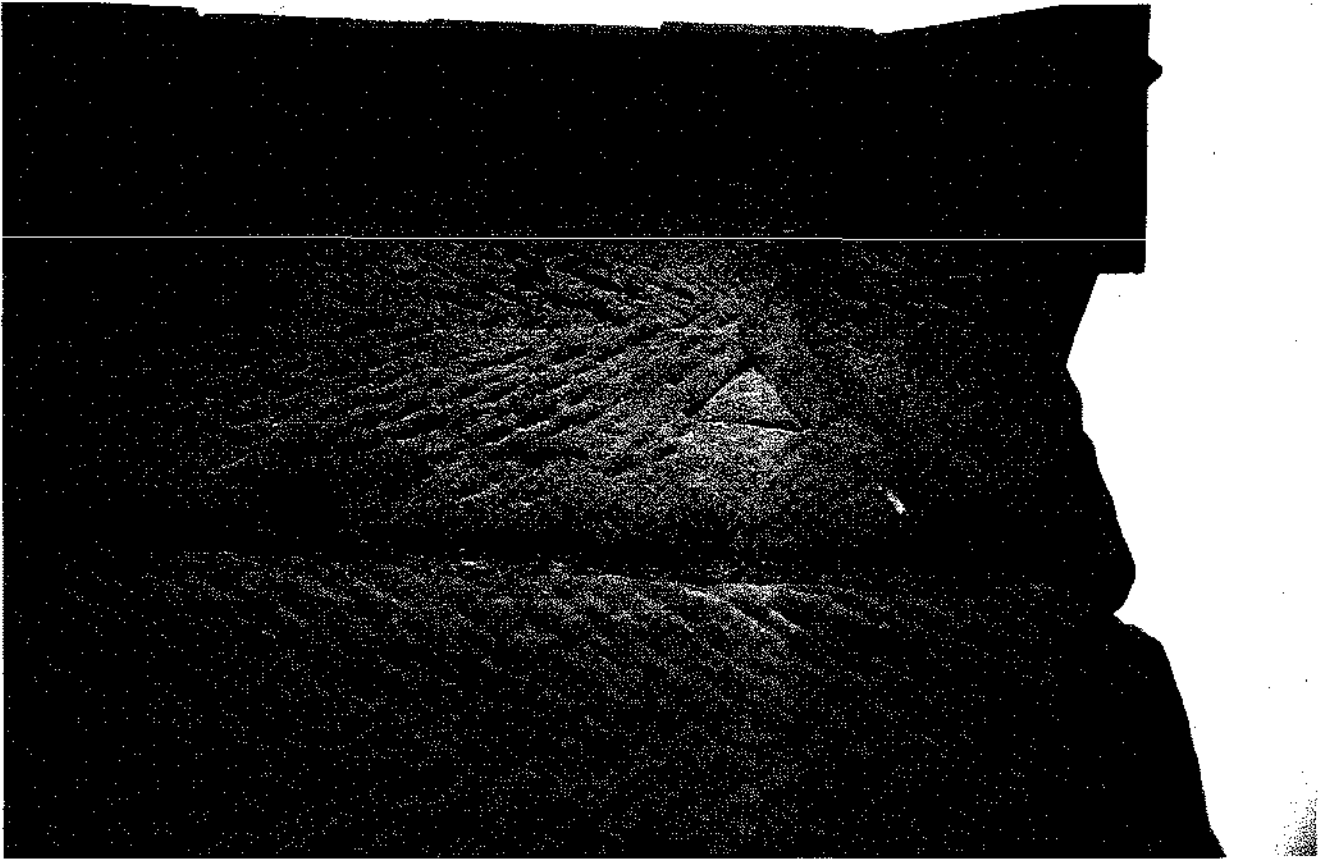


Plate 5



Plate 6

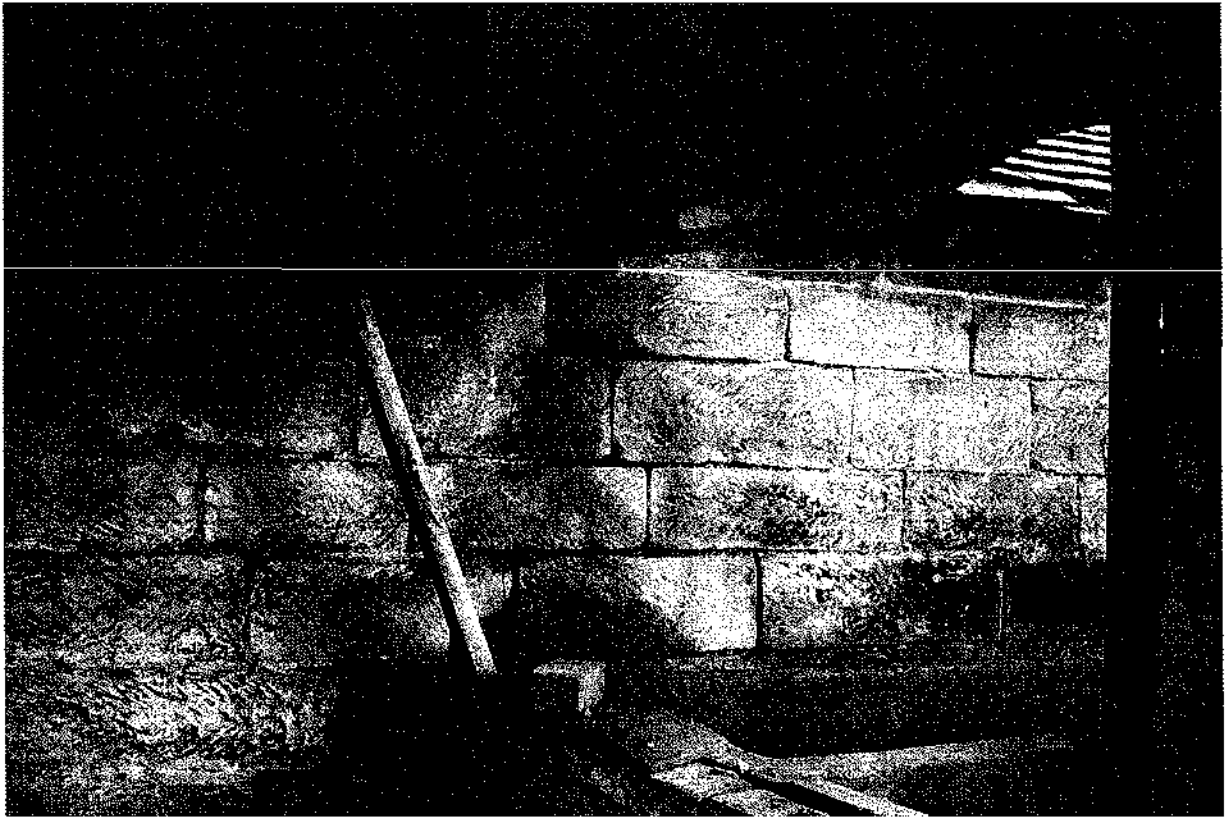


Plate 7



Plate 8



Plate 9



Plate 10

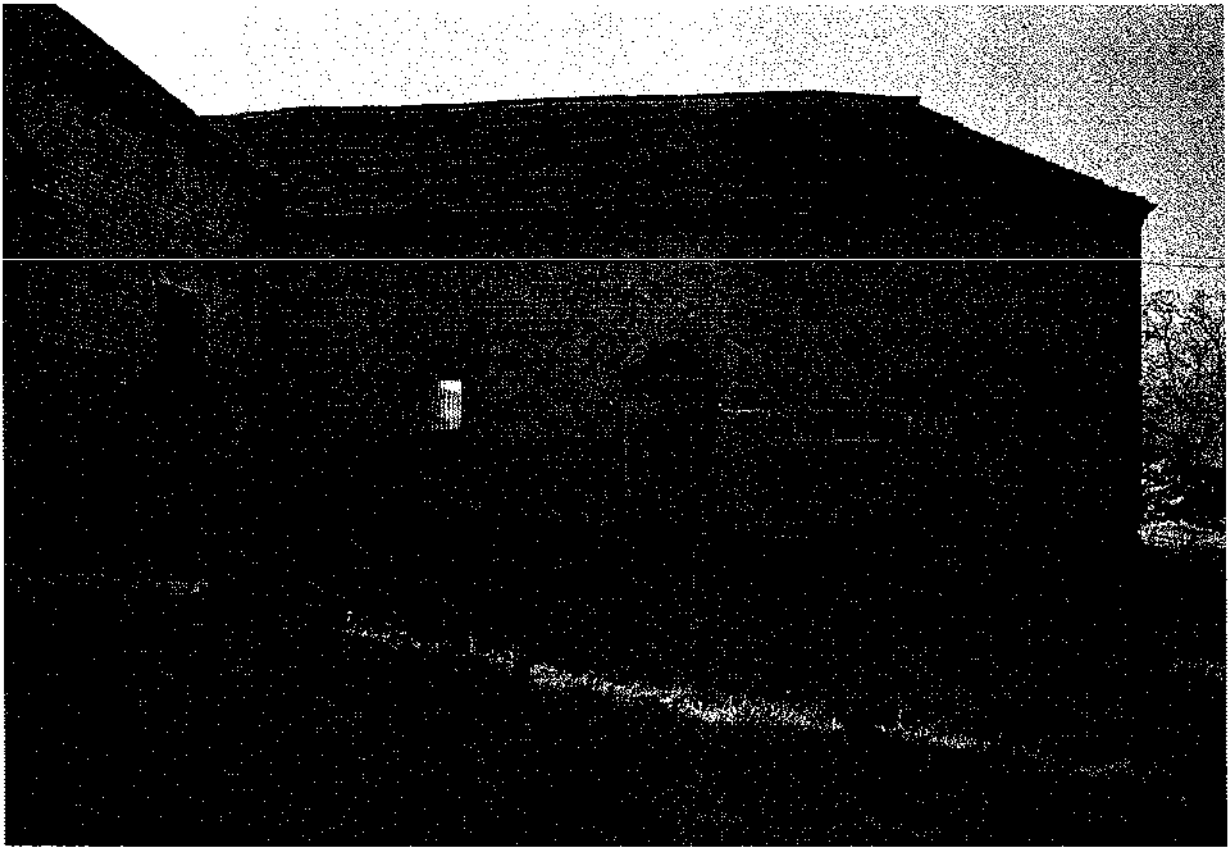


Plate 11



Plate 12



Plate 13



Plate 14



Plate 15