

**Blackladies Farm, Brewood,  
Staffordshire**

**Archaeological Building  
Recording and Watching Brief  
2004**

**Checked by**

**Supervisor..... date.....**

**Project Manager..... date.....**

Project No. 1223  
March 2006

**Blackladies Barn, Brewood, Staffordshire**  
**Archaeological Building Recording and Watching Brief 2004**

By Kate Bain and Malcolm Hislop

For  
Dove Homes and Developments Ltd

*For further information please contact:*  
Alex Jones (Director)  
Birmingham Archaeology  
The University of Birmingham  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham B15 2TT  
Tel: 0121 414 5513  
Fax: 0121 414 5516  
E-Mail: [bham-arch@bham.ac.uk](mailto:bham-arch@bham.ac.uk)  
Web Address: <http://www.barch.bham.ac.uk/bufau>

## **Contents**

	Summary	1
1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Site Location	2
3.0	Objectives	2
4.0	Methods	2
	4.1 Building Recording	2
	4.2 Watching Brief	2
5.0	Building Description	2
6.0	Watching Brief Results	3
7.0	Acknowledgements	4
8.0	References	4

## **Figures**

1. Location map
2. Site plan and location of trenches
3. Plan of the farm building

## **Plates**

1. The building from the north
2. The building from the southwest
3. Shelter shed pier from the southwest
4. Shelter shed pier detail from the northeast
5. Junction between shelter shed and loose box
6. Shelter shed interior from the northeast
7. Shelter shed interior from the southwest
8. Shelter shed roof truss from the northeast
9. Shelter shed hip rafter from the northwest

## **Blackladies Farm, Brewood, Staffordshire**

### **Archaeological Building Recording and Watching Brief 2004**

#### **SUMMARY**

*Archaeological building recording and a watching brief were undertaken at Blackladies Farm, Brewood, Staffordshire (NGR SJ 848094, Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Dove Homes and Developments Ltd, and was carried out in advance of and during redevelopment of the site for residential purposes. The work was required in order to fulfil a condition attached to planning permission granted by South Staffordshire District Council. The building recording consisted of an RCHME level 1 survey (RCHME 1996) of one of the former farm buildings, and the watching brief was carried out during groundworks involving the excavation of a service trench.*

*The farm building was identified as an early 19<sup>th</sup>-century shelter shed for cattle with an attached mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century loose box. During the watching brief the possible remains of an isolated cobble surface were recorded immediately below the topsoil, as was a drainage feature constructed of reused, worked sandstone blocks and post-medieval bricks. A possible waterlogged deposit, perhaps indicating the position of a former pond was also identified in trenches just to the north of the standing structures of Blackladies Farm. No further archaeological features or deposits were identified during the watching brief.*

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In July 2004 Birmingham Archaeology undertook building recording at Blackladies Farm, Brewood, Staffordshire, and in December of the same year observed a watching brief during the excavation of a service trench. The work was commissioned by Dove Homes and Developments Ltd in advance of and during the redevelopment of the site for residential purposes.

The work was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation produced by Birmingham Archaeology (Birmingham Archaeology 2004) and approved by South Staffordshire District Council. The project followed guidelines for building recording and watching briefs laid by the Institute of Field Archaeologists' (2001a and 2001b).

#### **2.0 SITE LOCATION (Figs 1 and 2)**

Blackladies is a grade II\* listed substantial brick house of c. 1600 on the site of a Benedictine nunnery founded by Bishop Roger De Clinton c. 1140 (Pevsner 1974, 79), and purchased after the Dissolution by Thomas Giffard who built the house. It is located to the north of Kiddemore Green Road approximately 2 miles west of Brewood, Staffordshire (centred on NGR SJ 848 094). The farm buildings are situated to the east of the house



### 3.0 OBJECTIVES

- To make a photographic record of one of the farm buildings prior to any work being carried out.
- To monitor all ground breaking activities and to preserve by record all archaeological deposits and features.

### 4.0 METHODS

#### 4.1 Building Recording

A record was made of the farm building equivalent to a Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England level 1 survey (RCHME 1996). This comprised a 35mm photographic record using monochrome and colour slide film, supplemented by written notes for interpretative purposes.

#### 4.2 Watching Brief

Ground-breaking activities were carried out under archaeological supervision. Recording was by means of *pro-forma* context and feature cards. Sections, where required were drawn at scales of 1:10 or 1:20 and plans at scale 1:50. Colour print and monochrome photographs were taken and all finds retained by context. The archive along with the finds is currently stored at the offices of Birmingham Archaeology.

### 5.0 BUILDING DESCRIPTION (Fig. 3)

#### Exterior

The farm building comprised an early 19<sup>th</sup>-century shelter shed for cattle, to the southwest end of which a pair of loose boxes had been added in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (Plates 1 and 2). The shelter shed was constructed of 9½" x 4½" x 2¾" red brick laid in Flemish stretcher bond, and had a renewed plain tile roof, and cast iron guttering to the rear (southeast). Aligned northeast/southwest facing northwest, the building formed the southeastern arm of a U-shaped block of farm buildings that enclosed three sides of a central yard. It was a single-storey structure with a dentilled eaves course to the rear and four open-fronted bays articulated with monolithic sandstone piers of square section tapering towards the top and clasping the timber wall plate to the front and rear (Plates 3 and 4). The piers bore coarse tooling marks of 19<sup>th</sup>-century character, and had two notches on each side to accommodate fencing, showing that the front could be enclosed. From left (northeast) to right (southwest) piers 2, 3, and 4 supported scarf joints in the wallplate. At each end of the front a vertical timber post, probably a railway sleeper, had been inserted on which to hang a door, now gone.

The two loose boxes were housed in a building attached to the right-hand side of the shelter shed and under the same roofline. To the rear (southeast), the junction of the two phases was marked by a vertical joint in the brickwork (Plate 5). The front of the loosebox extension had been much altered, and contained at least three phases of brickwork. The earliest of these was a c. 1m high area of 8¾" x 4¼" x 2¾" bricks laid

in stretcher bond, situated in the centre of the elevation. Phase 2 lay to the right (southwest), and comprised an area of later 19<sup>th</sup>-century 9" x 4¾" x 3" brick rising to the wallplate. Phase 3, which was of 20<sup>th</sup>-century date, lay immediately above Phase 1 rising to the wallplate, and incorporating a window to the right (southwest). There was a door at each end of the elevation.

## **Interior**

The shelter shed contained the remnants of a cobbled floor of pebbles (Plate 6 and 7). This had been covered or replaced with concrete at the southwest end, but large areas survived elsewhere in the building. The interior was divided into six roof bays divided by tie-beam and principal rafter trusses, supporting one pair of trenched purlins, but no ridge piece (Plate 8). The rafters were set in from the ends of the tie beams by approximately 1 foot (0.30m) and were morticed and tenoned at the apex. All joints were pegged. The southwest end of the roof was originally hipped, the two main rafters of which survived under the existing roof (Plate 9). On the southwest faces of the roof trusses, the tie beam and rafters bore pairs of carpenters' marks (Table 1; Plate 8). There were also marks at the southeast end of the tie beams, which corresponded with marks on the upper faces of the wallplate.

The northeastern loose box had a brick floor, the southwestern loosebox a concrete floor. There was a single tie-beam and principal rafter roof truss, supporting a single pair of trenched purlins; the rafters were morticed and tenoned at the apex but not pegged. At the northeastern end of the northeastern loosebox the former end wall of the shelter shed with its dentilled eaves course was visible. It had been continued upwards in brick in order to support the purlins of the addition.

## **6.0 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS (Fig. 2)**

A mechanical excavator was used to dig a service from the site access on Kiddemore Green Road up to the standing structures to the north, to a depth of 0.6m below the existing ground surface. The trench was aligned parallel to the existing roadway between Kiddemore Green Road and Blackladies, and then turned through 90 degrees in order to join services associated with the standing structures. A single sandstone and brick structure (1001) was identified running east-west across the trench. It comprised dressed sandstone blocks and bricks with a ceramic pipe in the centre and was sealed by the topsoil (1000). This was interpreted as a drainage feature. Just to the north of this, and to the east of a field access, a partial pebble and cobble surface was observed (1002). This was sealed only by the turf and appeared to be overlying topsoil. Its proximity to the field access and its position within the section suggested that it was part of a layer laid down to stabilise the access way.

The trenches associated more closely with the standing structures were cut into a very dark, organic deposit (1004) which was sealed by a hardcore and rubble yard surface (1003). The very dark organic nature of the soils was indicative of a waterlogged deposit perhaps suggesting the former location of a pond. No further archaeological features or deposits were identified during the course of the watching brief.

## **7.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The archaeological work was commissioned by Dove Homes and Developments Ltd., following recommendations made by South Staffordshire District Council. Malcolm Hislop managed the project for Birmingham Archaeology and undertook the building recording. Kate Bain conducted the watching brief. The illustrations were prepared by Nigel Dodds.

## **8.0 REFERENCES**

Birmingham Archaeology 2004, *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief and Building Recording at Blackladies Farm Barns, Brewood, South Staffordshire.*

IFA 2001a, *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures.*

IFA 2001b, *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief.*

Pevsner, N. 1974, *The Buildings of England: Staffordshire.*

RCHME 1996, *Recording Historic Buildings: a Descriptive Specification*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn.

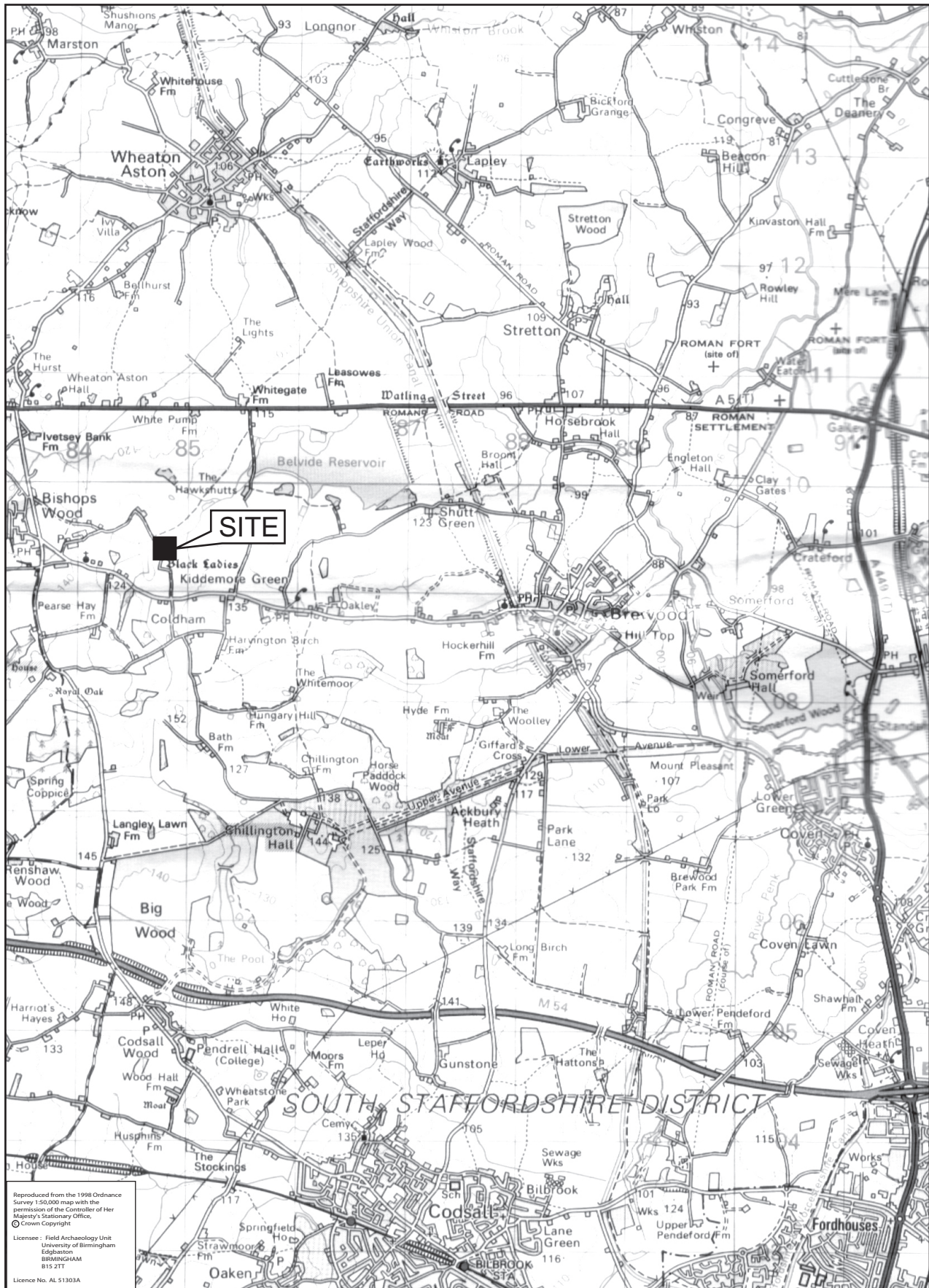


Fig.1

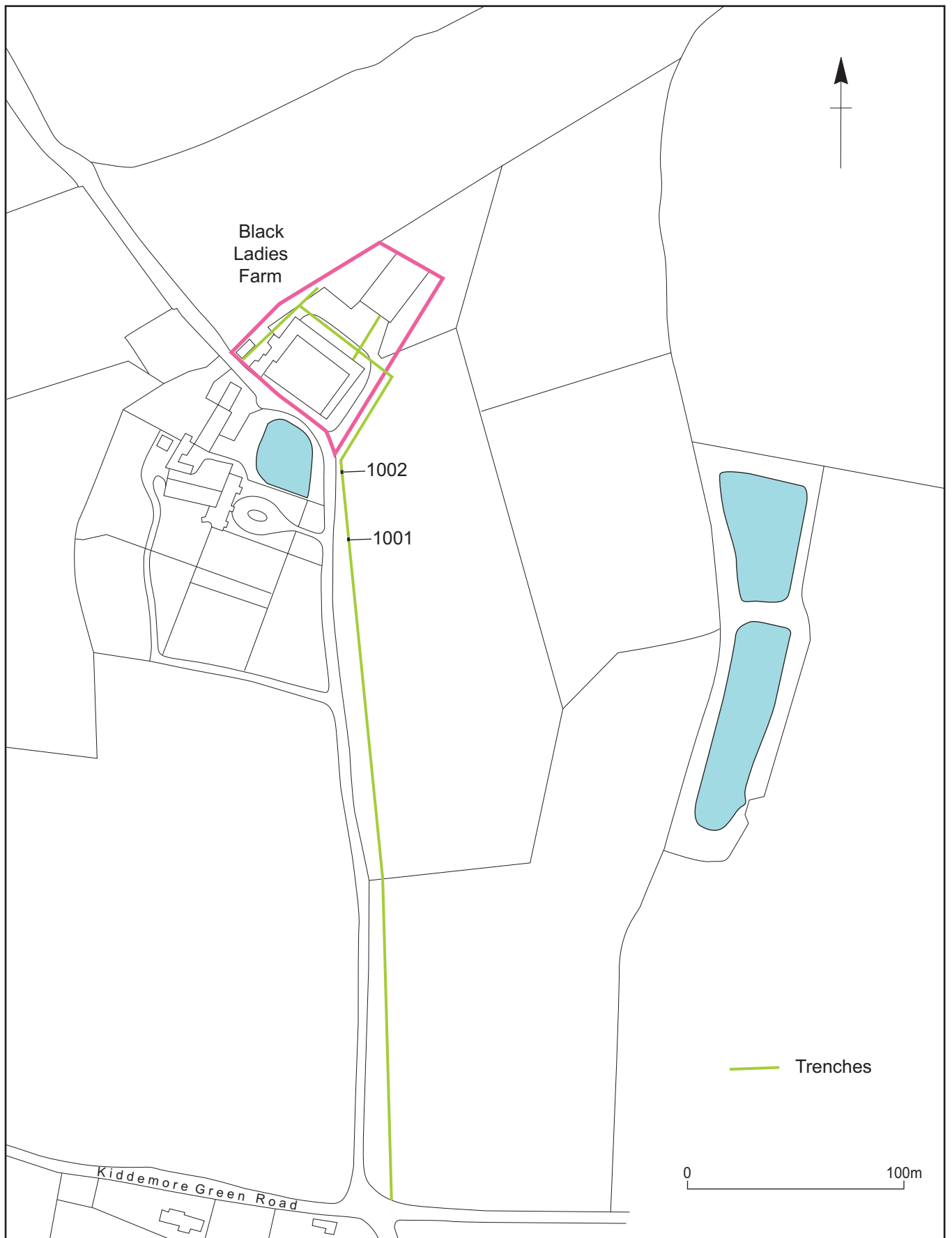


Fig.2

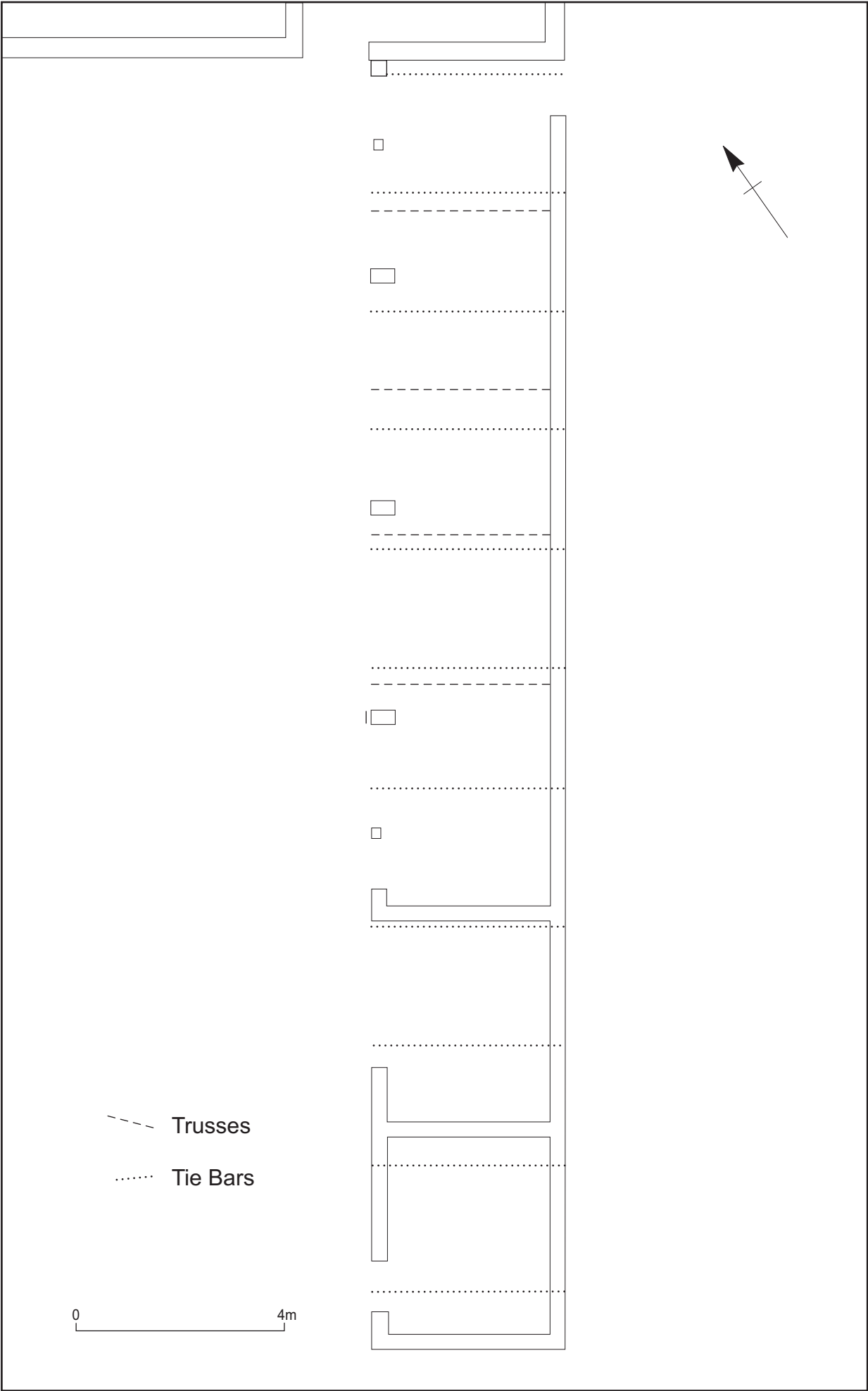


Fig.3





Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3





Plate 4



Plate 5



Plate 6





Plate 7



Plate 8



Plate 9