

119 Walsall Road, Cannock,
Staffordshire:

**An Historic Building Record,
2004**

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An Historic Building Record

By

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119 Walsall Road, Cannock: An Historic Building Record

Summary

In July 2004 Birmingham Archaeology carried out an historic building record of 119 Walsall Road, Cannock, Staffordshire (NGR SJ398350) for Staffordshire County Council. The building was the former offices of Cannock Associated Collieries Limited built in the late 1930s. Work was carried out in advance of the demolition of the buildings and the redevelopment of the site. The building survived in its original form, with much of its original internal decoration. The outbuilding behind the main building was also recorded and dated to the late 1930s. 119 Walsall Road was built in the Georgian style, with internal and external detailing associated with the Art Deco period.

1.0 Introduction

This report describes the outcome of archaeological building recording carried out at 119 Walsall Road, Cannock. The project arose due to planning permission being granted for the demolition of the buildings and the redevelopment of the site. The archaeological building recording was carried out by Birmingham Archaeology on behalf of Staffordshire County Council. The building's form, construction and function will be analysed in this report and it will be placed in a historical, geographical and architectural context.

2.0 Site Location (Fig.1)

The building is situated at 119 Walsall Road, Cannock, Staffordshire (NGR SJ398350). Its surroundings are largely residential, however there are large, modern, commercial buildings to the side and rear of the building.

3.0 Objectives

- To compile a comprehensive and high quality photographic record of the structures identified for demolition.
- To provide a review of the local and regional historical context of the structures recorded by the project.
- To produce a high quality, fully integrated archive suitable for long-term deposition in order to 'preserve by record' the buildings in their current form prior to demolition.
- To secure the analysis, conservation and long-term storage of the archive produced by the recording of the historic building.

4.0 Methods

Historical research was carried out at the Staffordshire Record Office, Lichfield Record Office, the William Salt Library and the University of Birmingham library. A search was made of all relevant published and unpublished sources including historic maps and photographs.

The building and outbuildings were recorded in accordance with *Recording Historic Buildings: A Descriptive Specification* (RCHME, 2nd edition, 1996) as follows: written account 1,2,4,6,9,12; survey and drawings 2,6,7; photographic record 1-6.

A photographic survey was undertaken including internal features, fixtures and fittings, and illustrative photographs of key views. The position from which the photographs were taken was annotated on site plans and elevations. The survey was carried out with 35mm cameras using monochrome and colour print films. In addition some colour transparencies were taken for presentation purposes.

Ground floor and first floor plans were drawn up by hand at a scale of 1:50. Elevations of both the front and rear of the building were drawn at a scale of 1:50 by hand from a horizontal datum. Internal and external details such as moulded stonework, and decorative elements including fireplaces and moulded woodwork were drawn at a scale of 1:10.

5.0 Historical Background

Cannock was a mining town dependent upon the rich coal deposits of Cannock Chase. At the height of the coal mining industry, over 30,000 people were employed to work in dozens of thriving pits. 119 Walsall Road was built in the late 1930s as head quarters for Cannock Associated Collieries Ltd. It was built in close proximity to Mid Cannock Colliery which was established in the early 20th century on land belonging to William Harrison, which the Cannock Associated Collieries Limited purchased in 1937 (Conveyance document 1937).

Coal mining in the area was in decline during the second half of the 20th century, and by the mid-1990s all the collieries in the area had been shut down. 119 Walsall road was sold to Staffordshire County Council by Cannock Associated Collieries Limited in the 1955 after they went into voluntary liquidation in 1948 (Special Resolution of Voluntary Liquidation 1948). 119 Walsall Road then became Cannock Teachers' Centre.

119 Walsall Road appears the Ordnance Survey 1938 edition 6 inch map (Fig.2). The building is shown unshaded perhaps suggesting that it was under construction at the time the area was surveyed. On the Ordnance Survey 1957 and 1968 edition 25 inch maps, 119 Walsall Road is shown in its present form. From map evidence, little or no changes or developments have been carried out to the building. Its shape in plan has remained unaltered. Map evidence also confirms that the main building and its outbuilding to the rear are of the same date.

The boundaries of the plot of land on which the house is built have not changed since the time of its construction. The property is set back from a main road and has a narrow drive to the building. The landscaping of the area in front of the house and the position of the drive within this land have also remained unaltered.

6.0 Description

Built in the late 1930s in a Georgian style with Art Deco detailing, 119 Walsall Road was a five-bay building with two single-storey wings, one on either side of the main block (Plate 1). The main body of the building had two storeys on a moulded brick plinth (to the front and sides) with an attic behind a plain coped parapet. In plan it was rectangular aligned north-south facing west. The building was constructed from brown brick, laid in Flemish stretcher bond, and had a steeply pitched, hipped, pan tile roof.

Exterior

Front Elevation (Fig.3, Plate 1)

This elevation was characterised by a large central doorway and glazing bar sash windows. The door was set within a moulded stone surround with Art Deco detailing and was approached by three stone steps with rounded corners (Fig.4A, Plate 2). The two-leaf, six-panelled door had a rectangular overlight. Directly above the door at first-floor level was a long sash window also with moulded stone surround opening onto a semi-raised elliptical stone balcony with moulded detail and decorative metal railing (Fig. 4B, Plate 3). A key stone in the moulded stone frame of the window provided the bracket for a concrete flagpole.

The sash windows on either side of the central door were evenly spaced. There were four on either side of the central door and window, two at ground-floor level and two at first-floor level. At ground-floor level these windows had 16 panes with reduced proportions to the first floor. Each window had a wedge shaped brick lintel above it. The attic was lit by three flat-roofed dormers with glazing bar casements.

The single-storey wings on either side to the central section also had the moulded brick plinth, but were set back from the main body of the building. Each wing had a narrow blind window with brick detail (Plate 4).

The building had three chimneys in total, two visible on the front elevation, on either side of the main block.

Rear Elevation (Fig. 5, Plate 5)

The main feature of the rear elevation was a central canted entrance and staircase bay. A Double door in the canted bay allowed access to the rear of the building, above this was a large sash window. The rest of the main section was similar in character to the front with

glazing bar sash windows, four either side of the central bay, all of which had wedge shaped brick lintels.

The single-storey wings had windows at the rear. The wing to the right had three narrow segmental-headed windows, the wing to the left had a large sash window above the entrance to the cellar.

A tall brick corner chimney was on the left-hand side of this elevation.

Interior

The ground floor had nine rooms as well as an entrance hall, staircase, and small passage to the rear. Two corridors extended north and south from the central hall allowing access to the rooms at the front and rear of the building. The first floor had five rooms, staircase and two corridors (as in the ground floor). In the text these rooms will be referred to by number which correspond to a plan (Figures 6 & 9). The details of the decoration, fixtures and fittings in these rooms are listed in appendix A. The interior of the building was characterised by spacious well-decorated rooms to the front with smaller offices and service rooms to the rear. There were high ceilings throughout, and the central entrance hall and staircase formed a major feature.

Ground Floor (Fig.6)

The two main rooms on this floor (G.01 & G.02) were at the front of the building, either side of the entrance hall. They were the largest and most extensively decorated rooms on the ground floor. Each had identical, imposing ceramic Art Deco fireplaces with central wave detail and ribbed opening (Fig.7A & B, Plate 7). Both rooms also had moulded skirting board, dado rail and picture rail (Fig.8A-C), and a decorative plaster cornice with moulded wave detail (Fig. 7C, Plate 8). The rooms on either side of these and the rooms to the rear of the building had some original detail including dado and picture rails, brass fittings and yellow granite flooring. They were notably smaller in size than the two main reception rooms.

The front door led into an impressive spacious, octagonal entrance hall (G 07), providing access to rooms, corridors and the staircase. This space had a deeply recessed octagonal panel in the ceiling, decorated with moulded plaster cornice (Plate 9). Two corridors (G 06 & G 08) running the full length of the building extended north and south from this entrance hall. This area was laid with a dark green polished granite floor. The walls had a polished granite dado, alternating from dark green at the base, pale green up the wall finished with a further strip of dark green granite. This decoration continued up the staircase, onto the landing and into the corridors of the first floor.

The steps of the staircase were constructed out of moulded concrete. The bottom step of the main flight was enlarged and swept around to form a curved edge, the step above this echoed the curve. The staircase had decorative metal railings with a brass-topped handrail, and featured some Art Deco design. The staircase (Fig.4C, Plate 10) had twenty-two steps up to the first floor landing and a further three steps to the back passage

way and the exit at the rear of the building. There were two small landings mid-way up the staircase (broken by two steps) below the sash window described in the rear elevation. Here the staircase turned to continue up to the first-floor landing.

First Floor (Fig.9)

As in the case of the ground floor the first floor has two main rooms to the front of the building (F 01 & F 02), these are decorated in an Art Deco style. Each has a moulded polished stone fireplace with chamfered bases to the side and fluting (Fig.7D & E, Plate 11). These rooms also had the moulded skirting board, dado, picture rail and cornice present in the described ground floor reception rooms. F 01 featured a long sash window opening onto the stone balcony above the central doorway. The rooms to the rear of the building had some original detail including dado, picture rails, brass fittings and yellow granite flooring. They were notably smaller in size than the two main rooms. The landing and corridors had the green polished granite floor and dado of the ground floor area. Above the landing was the hatch entrance to the attic area.

Most rooms in the building had a six-panelled wooden door, the majority of which had brass handles. For scale drawings of details of internal decoration including fireplaces, moulded skirting board, dado and plaster cornices see Figs 7 & 8

Outbuilding (Fig. 10)

To the rear of the main house was an outbuilding/garage. This appeared to be of similar date to the house. Constructed from red brick laid in Flemish stretcher bond, it had a corrugated asbestos roof. This outbuilding followed the same alignment as the main house.

Exterior

Front Elevation (Plate 12)

The outbuilding had brick ends and rear, the ends stepped up in the centre. The front elevation was composed of 6 large timber sliding doors on steel runners (Plate 13). The runners were made by Henderson and were embossed with this name.

Rear Elevation

At the rear of the building there were six bays of windows. Each of these had a concrete lintel. The windows had metal frames and were small-pane, fixed-light windows, each had a four-pane hinged opening section at the top.

Interior

Between each window was a brick pier supporting timber beams, which in turn supported the roof structure. The outbuilding had a concrete floor. A small part of the north end of the building had been sectioned off to form two small rooms.

7.0 Discussion

As already stated 119 Walsall Road was built in the late 1930s in a Georgian style with Art Deco detailing, the majority of which appeared in inside. Externally, however, there were some features that illustrated the period of architecture from which this building dates. At first glance the style of the building appears to be classical and reserved, however closer observation of the details in the front elevation reveal a subtle use of Art Deco forms. The most important of these were in the doorway and steps leading up to it. Moulded stone framed the door, this featured a thin column with curved corners either side reaching to the height of the balcony above. Each of the columns were decorated with two curved horizontal bands, the curved line being a common feature of Art Deco design (Bayer 1990:31) (Plate 14). The steps also feature the use of the curve. Each of the three stone steps had curved corners, with ever decreasing dimensions (Fig.4, Plate 2). The balcony above the central doorway was also highly decorative, Constructed from moulded stone with curved detailing.

Also on the front elevation was the use of blind windows in the wings on either side of the main section. The brick band detail on these is a further element of thirties design and is perhaps an echo of the horizontal bands of the stone frame of the door (Plate 4).

Much of the original internal decoration of 119 Walsall Road survived, and was of a high quality. It is internally that the extent of Art Deco influence on the appearance of the building could be seen. The first main area of interest was the entrance hall and staircase. As briefly mentioned before the large octagonal entrance hall was the heart of the building and for this reason was decorated with a highly recessed ceiling panel, the moulded plaster cornice which adorned it showed classic elements of Art Deco design. The clean lines of the two continuous parallel waves show the simplicity of 1930s interior decoration, a popular motif, variants of which were observed in other areas of the building (Plate 15). The central staircase had two curved steps at its base, similar to those seen on the building's exterior.

The two ground-floor reception rooms each had similar fireplaces (Fig.9, Plate 7). Highly decorative and unmistakably Art Deco, they combined a modern block-like structure with curved lines, the repetitive curves to the central section a popular design feature of the time. Once again there was the use of the wave motif, this time decorating the mantle above the hearth. In these rooms and the two large rooms on the first floor the plaster cornice also illustrated 1930s style. It used a variant of the wave motif used in the entrance hall, this time more angular but with a continued use of the same clean simplicity (Fig.7C, Plate 8).

119 Walsall Road therefore was a combination of Classical Georgian style architecture with elements of Art Deco design and decoration. The subtle blending of the two styles allowed for a smart, well presented building both externally and internally.

8.0 Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was completed by Leonie Driver and Malcolm Hislop. This report was written by Leonie Driver and edited by Malcolm Hislop, who also managed the project. Thanks are due to the staff of Staffordshire Record Office, Lichfield Record Office, the William Salt Library and Staffordshire County Council for their assistance. The illustrations for this report were prepared by John Halsted.

References

9.1 Original Sources

Deeds held by Staffordshire County Council relating to:

The Conveyance of land situated at Bridgtown in the parish of Cannock in the County of Stafford. William Harrison Ltd to Cannock Associated Collieries Ltd. 7th June 1937

Cannock Associated Collieries Ltd. Special resolution of voluntary liquidation. Passed 6th September 1948.

9.2 Secondary Sources

Bayer P. 1990. *Art deco interiors: Decoration and design classics of the 1920s and 1930s*. London: Thames and Hudson,

Pugh R.B(ed). 1967. *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Vol.II*. London: Oxford University Press

9.3 Cartographic Sources

Map: 1938. Ordnance Survey Staffordshire 51SW

Map: 1957. Ordnance Survey Staffordshire SJ9809

Map: 1968. Ordnance Survey Staffordshire SJ9809

APPENDIX A

Appendix A

Room by Room description of original decoration, fixtures and fittings.
Please refer to plan for locations of individual rooms and areas.

G.01 Large room at front of building

- Moulded skirting board
- Moulded picture rail
- Art Deco ceramic fireplace
- 2 sash windows
- Six panelled door with moulded frame and brass door knob
- Brass light switch
- Decorative plaster cornice with wave motif

G.02 Large room at front of building

- Moulded skirting board
- Moulded dado rail
- Moulded picture rail
- Art Deco ceramic fireplace
- Hatch opening into G.05 with moulded frame
- 2 sash windows
- Six panelled door with moulded frame and large brass door handle
- Brass light switch
- Decorative plaster cornice with wave motif

G.03 Small room in south wing at front of building

- Six panelled sliding door with brass handle

G.04 Small room in north wing at front of building

- Six panelled door with plain frame

G.05 Entrance hall

- Dark green polished granite floor
- Dark and pale green polished granite dado
- Six panelled, two leaf door with moulded frame and rectangular overlight
- Hatch to G.02

G.06 South corridor

- Dark green polished granite floor
- Dark and pale green polished granite dado
- Brass light switches

G.07 Entrance hall

- Dark green polished granite floor
- Dark and pale green polished granite dado

- Concrete staircase with rounded bottom steps and metal railing
- Brass light switch
- Deeply recessed octagonal ceiling panel with decorative plaster cornice

G.08 North corridor

- Dark green polished granite floor
- Dark and pale green polished granite dado
- Sash window
- Brass light switch

G.09 Small room in south wing at rear of building

- Moulded skirting board
- Moulded dado rail
- Sash window
- Six panelled door with moulded frame and brass door knob
- Brass light switch

G.10 Room at rear of building

- Moulded skirting board
- Moulded dado rail
- Moulded picture rail
- Two sash windows
- Recess in internal wall
- Six panelled door with moulded frame and brass door knob
- Brass light switch

G.11 Back passage to rear of entrance hall

- Dark green polished granite floor
- Dark and pale green polished granite dado
- Double door at rear of building
- Three steps down to back passage way
- Cupboard under the staircase with six panelled door with moulded frame and plastic handle

G.12 Small room at rear of building

- Moulded skirting board
- Six panelled door with moulded frame and brass door knob
- Sash window
- Brass light switch

G.13 Small room at rear of building

- Moulded skirting board
- Six panelled door with moulded frame and brass door knob
- Sash window

- Brass light switch
- G.14** Small room in north wing at rear of building
- Yellow granite floor
 - Three small narrow windows with hinged opening at top and frosted glass
 - Six panelled door with moulded frame and brass door knob
 - Brass light fitting
- F.01** Large room at front of building
- Moulded skirting board
 - Moulded dado rail
 - Moulded stone fire place
 - Three sash and one long sash window
 - Moulded stone balcony
 - Six panelled door with moulded frame and brass door knob
 - Brass light switches
 - Decorative plaster cornice with wave motif
- F.02** Large room at front of building
- Moulded skirting board
 - Moulded dado rail
 - Moulded stone fire place
 - Three sash windows
 - Moulded stone balcony
 - Six panelled door with moulded frame and brass door knob
 - Brass light switches
 - Decorative plaster cornice with wave motif
- F.03** South corridor
- Dark green polished granite floor
 - Dark and pale green polished granite dado
 - Narrow sash window
- F.04** Landing
- Dark green polished granite floor
 - Dark and pale green polished granite dado
 - Sash window on stairway
 - Metal railing with brass hand rail
 - Brass light switches
 - Hatch entrance to attic
- F.05** North corridor
- Dark green polished granite floor
 - Dark and pale green polished granite dado

- Narrow sash window
- Brass coat hooks
- Brass light switch

F.06 Small room at rear of building

- Yellow polished granite floor
- Double sash window with frosted glass
- Six panelled door with moulded frame and brass door knob

F.07 Small room at rear of building

- Yellow polished granite floor
- Double sash window with frosted glass
- Six panelled door with moulded frame and brass door knob
- Brass light switches

F.08 Small room at rear of building

- Plain skirting board
- Moulded dado rail
- Two sash windows
- Six panelled door with moulded frame and brass door knob
- Brass light switch
-

APPENDIX B

Film No. 1

2. Front elevation from the W
3. Front elevation from the SW
4. Front elevation from the NW
5. Front elevation from the SW
6. Front gate from the W
7. Front gate from the W
8. Front wall from the SW
9. Front wall from the NW
10. Front door approach from the W
11. N gate pier from the NW
12. S gate pier from the SW
13. Front door jamb from the SW
14. Front door detail from the SW
15. Front door detail from the SW
16. Detail of front door steps from the W
17. N Wing detail from the W
18. First floor balcony from the W
19. Rear elevation from the NE
20. Rear elevation from the SE
21. Outbuilding from the SW
22. Blank
23. Outbuilding from the NW
24. N Wing from the E
25. Room F1 from the N
26. Room F1 from the NW
27. Room F1 from the NE
28. Room F1 from the SE
29. Room F1 from the SW
30. Room F1, detail of chimney cornice from the W
31. Room F1, detail of chimney cornice from the W
32. Room F1, detail of cornice from the W
33. Room F1, detail of dado rail and chimney breast from the NW
34. Room F1, fireplace from the W
35. Room F1, detail of fireplace from the NW
36. Room F1, detail of fireplace from the NW
37. Room F1, fireplace fender from the N

Film No. 2

1. Spoiled
2. Room G2, fireplace from the S
3. Room G2, fireplace from the S
4. Room G2, detail of fireplace from the S
5. Room G2, detail of fireplace from the SE
6. Room G2, fireplace fender from the S
7. Room G2 from the SE
8. Room G2 from the SE
9. Room G2 from the SW
10. Room G2 from the NE
11. Room G2 from the NE
12. Room G2 from the NW
13. Room G1, fireplace from the N
14. Room G1, fireplace fender from the N
15. Room G1, fireplace detail from the N
16. Room G1, fireplace detail from the NW
17. Room G1 from the NE
18. Room G1 from the NW
19. Room G1 detail of chimney breast
20. Room G1 from the SW
21. Room G1 from the SE
22. Rooms G5 (foreground) and G7 from the W
23. Room G7, ceiling panel from the W
24. Room G7, detail of ceiling panel frieze from the W
25. Room G7, detail of ceiling panel frieze from the N
26. Room G7, staircase from the NW
27. Room G7, dado from the SW
28. Room G7, staircase dado from the SW
29. Room G7, detail of stair newel from the NW
30. Room G7, detail of stair newel from the NW
31. Room G7, detail of stair newel from the NW
32. Room G1, detail of dado rail from the S
33. Room G1, detail of dado rail and fireplace from the NE
34. Room G1, detail of door handle from the SW
35. Room G2, hatch in S wall from the N
36. Room G2, light switch
37. Room G1, Detail of door handle from the SW

Film No.3

1. Roof truss from the N
2. Roof truss from the S
3. Roof truss from the N
4. Roof truss from the S
5. Roof from the E
6. Roof from the SE
7. Roof from the NE
8. Roof from the NE
9. Roof from the NE
10. Room F2 from the SE
11. Room F2 from the SW
12. Room F2 from the W
13. Room F2 from the E
14. Room F2, doorway and corridor from the W
15. Room F2, fireplace from the S
16. Room G7, ceiling panel from the N
17. Room G7, ceiling panel from the E

APPENDIX C

Contents of Archive

- Black and white photographs (3 films)
- Colour slides (3 films)
- 8 sheets of drawings on drafting film
- Copy of the deeds

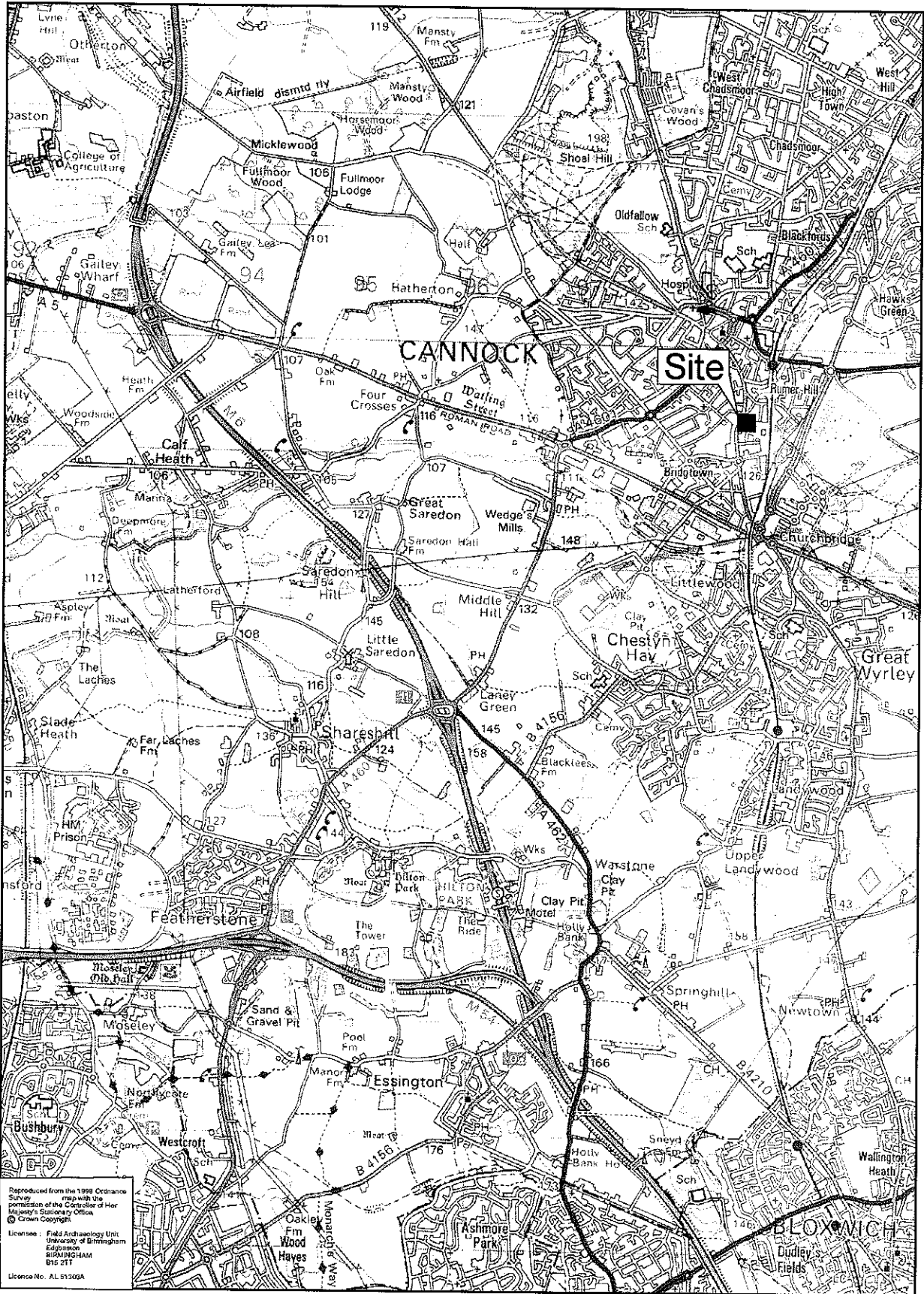


Fig.1 Location of Site

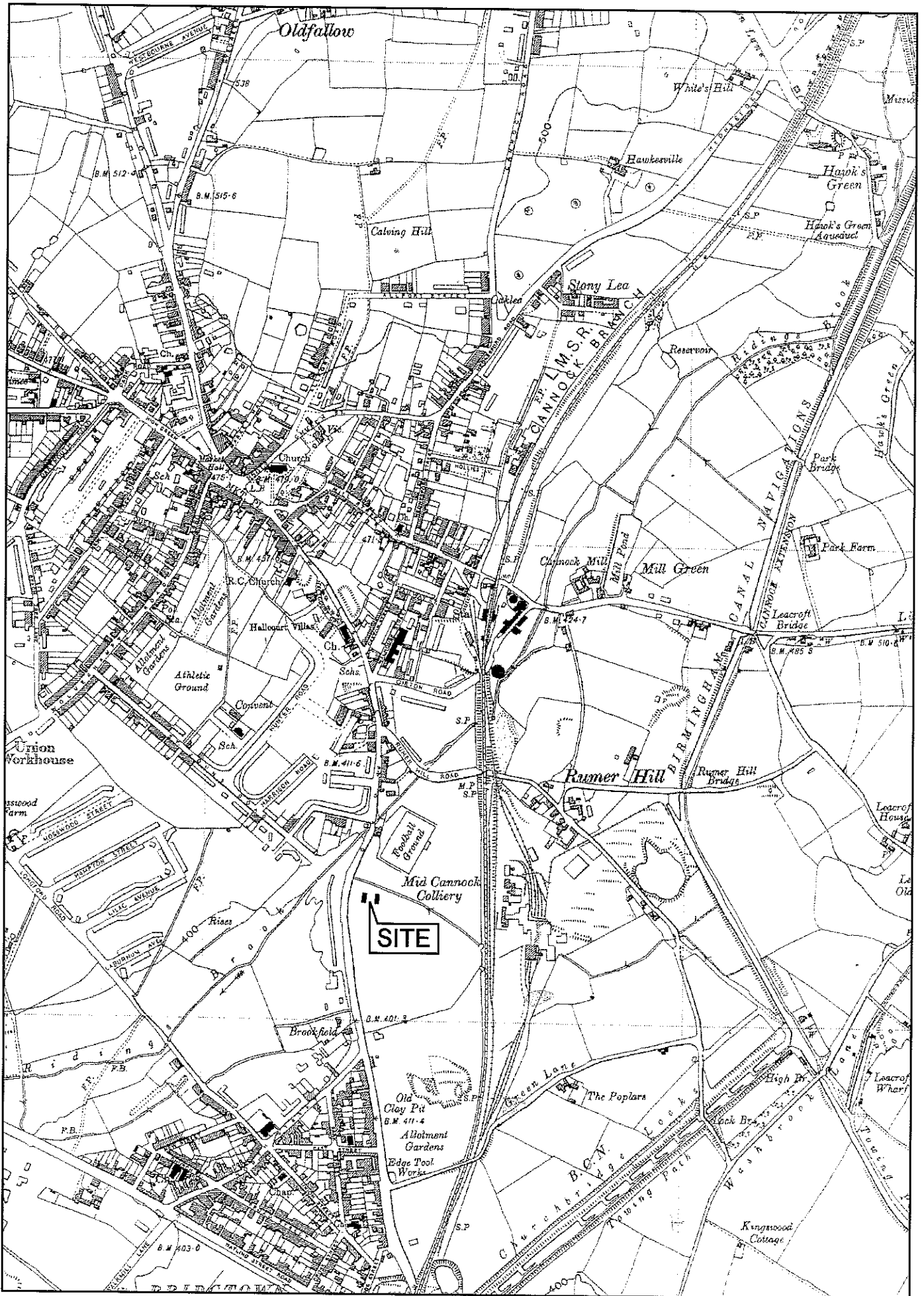


Fig.2 The Site in 1938

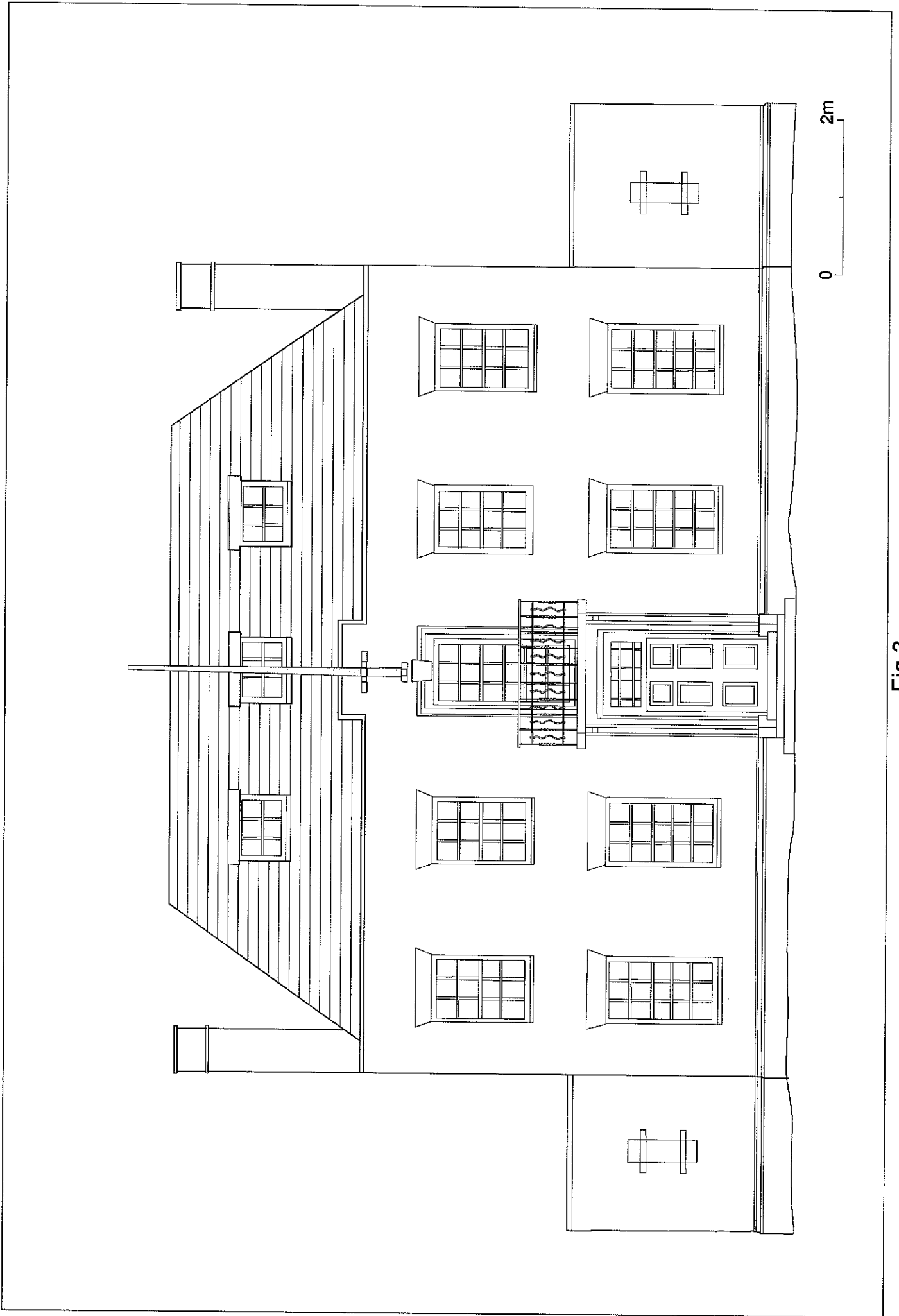
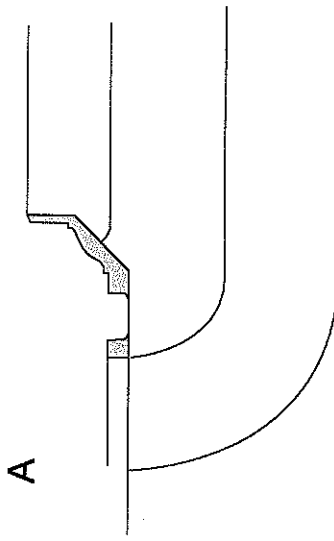
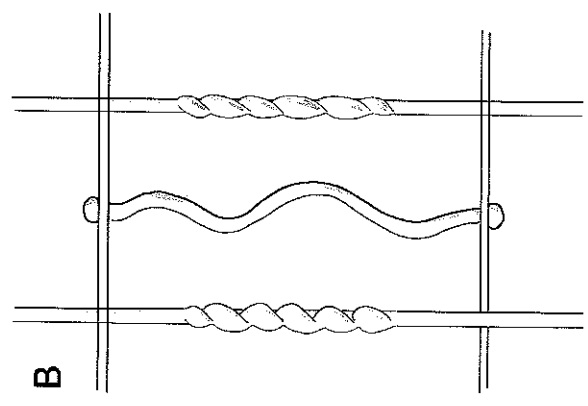


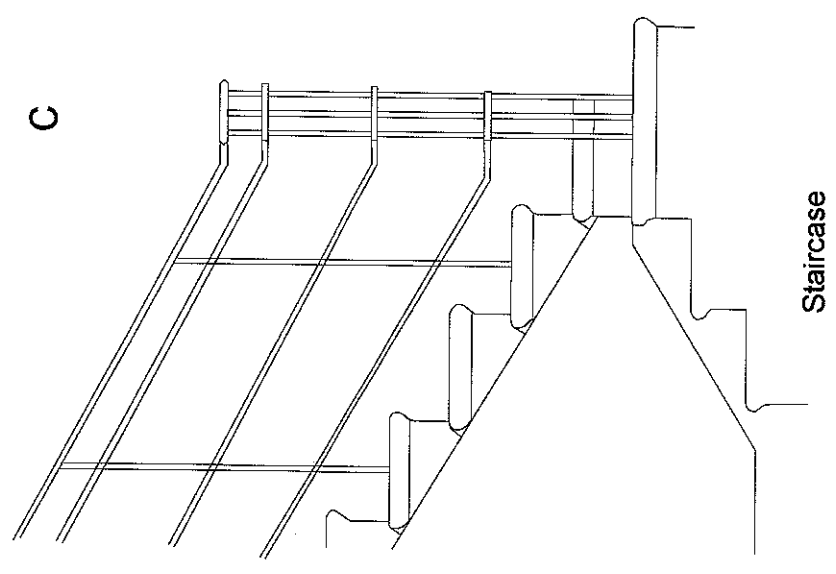
Fig.3



Front Door Jamb



Balustrade Detail



Staircase

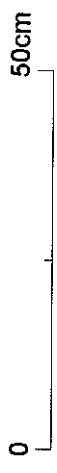


Fig.4

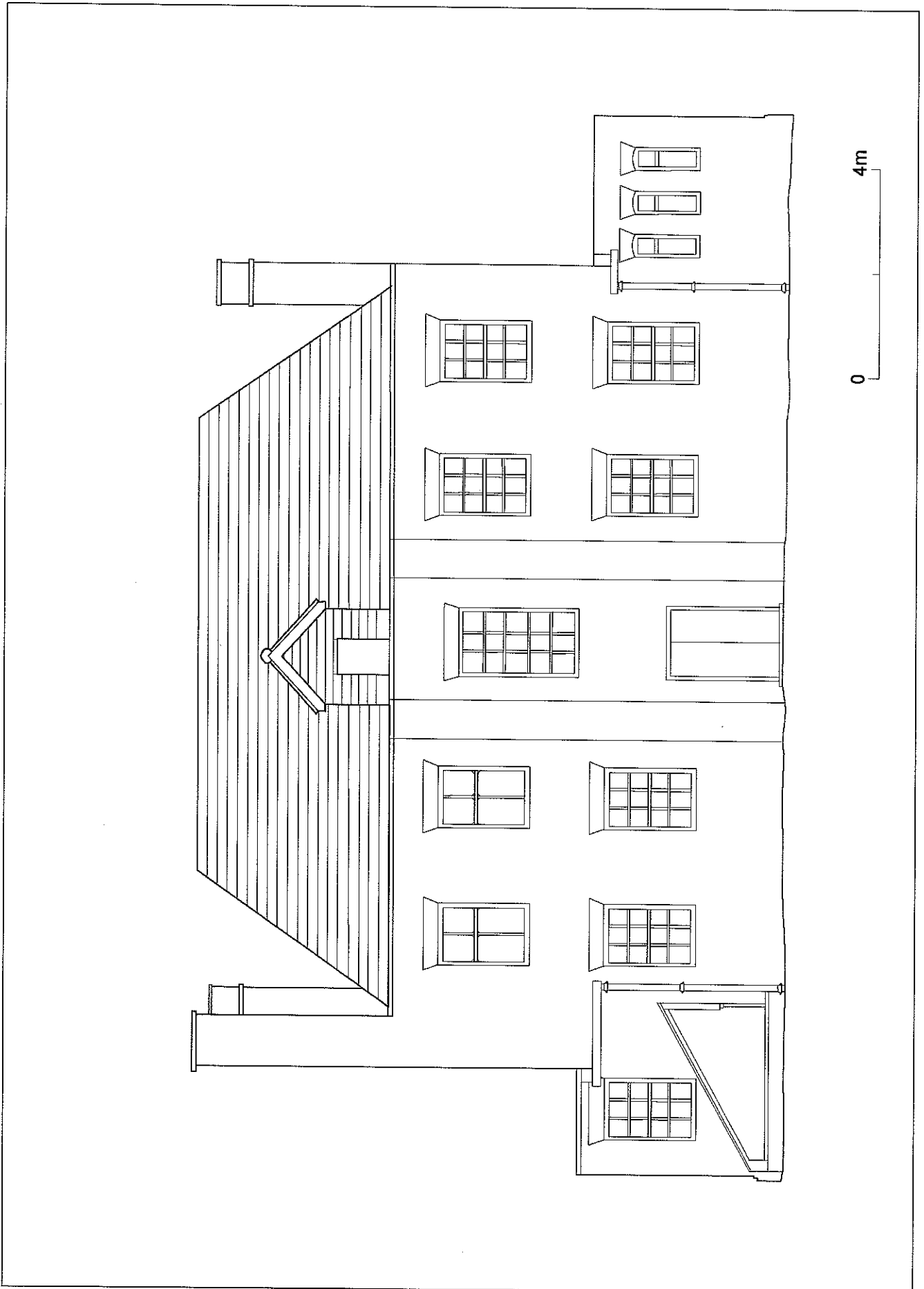


Fig.5

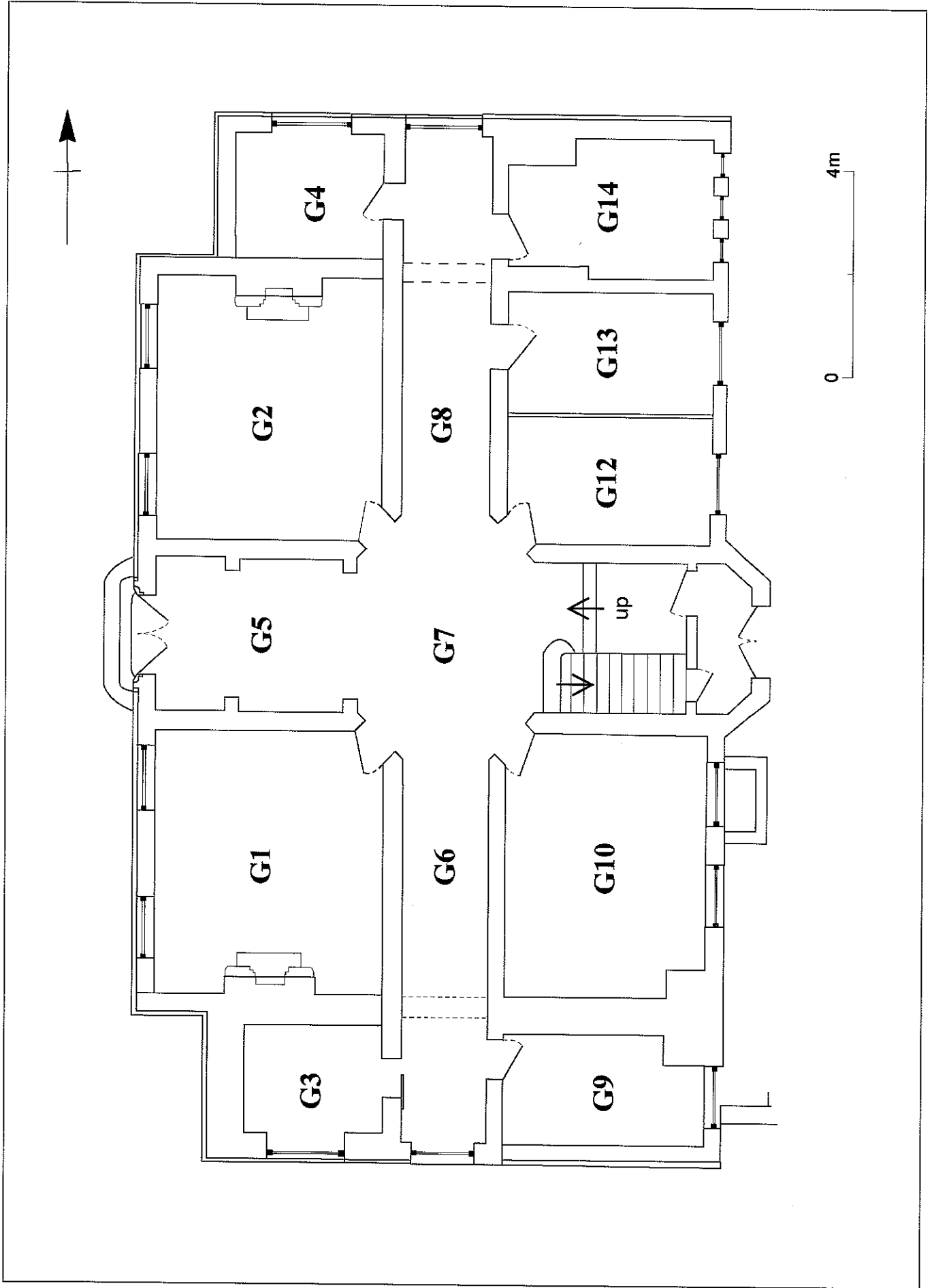
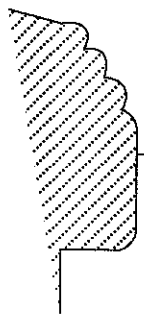
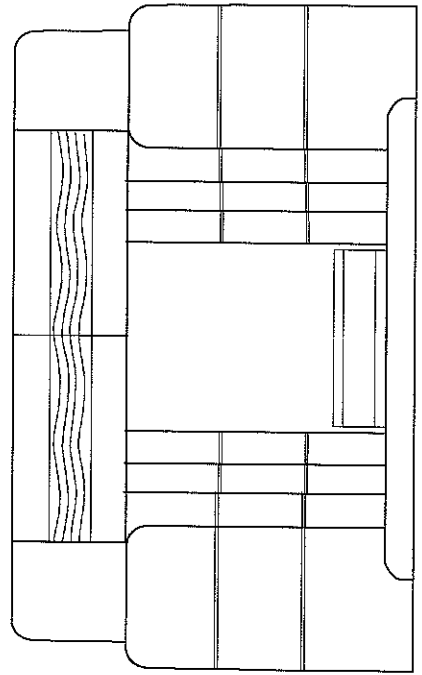


Fig.6



Ground Floor Fireplace Jamb

A

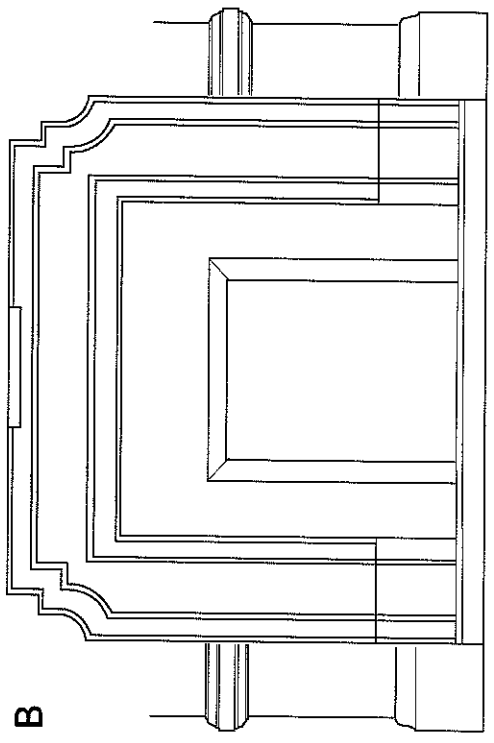


Ground Floor Fireplace



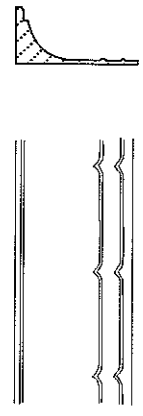
First Floor Fireplace Jamb

B



First Floor Fireplace

C



Plaster Cornice



Fig.7

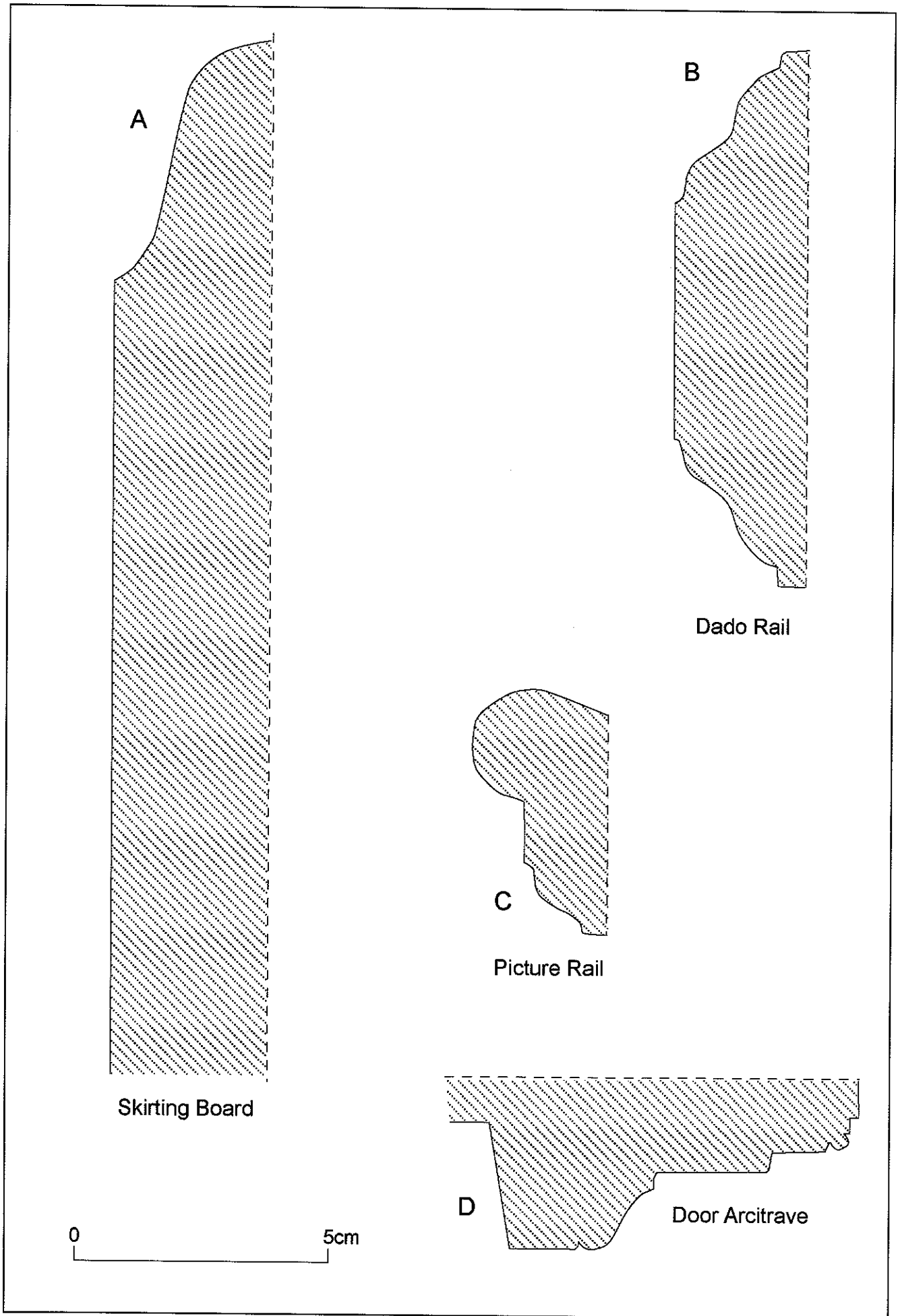


Fig.8

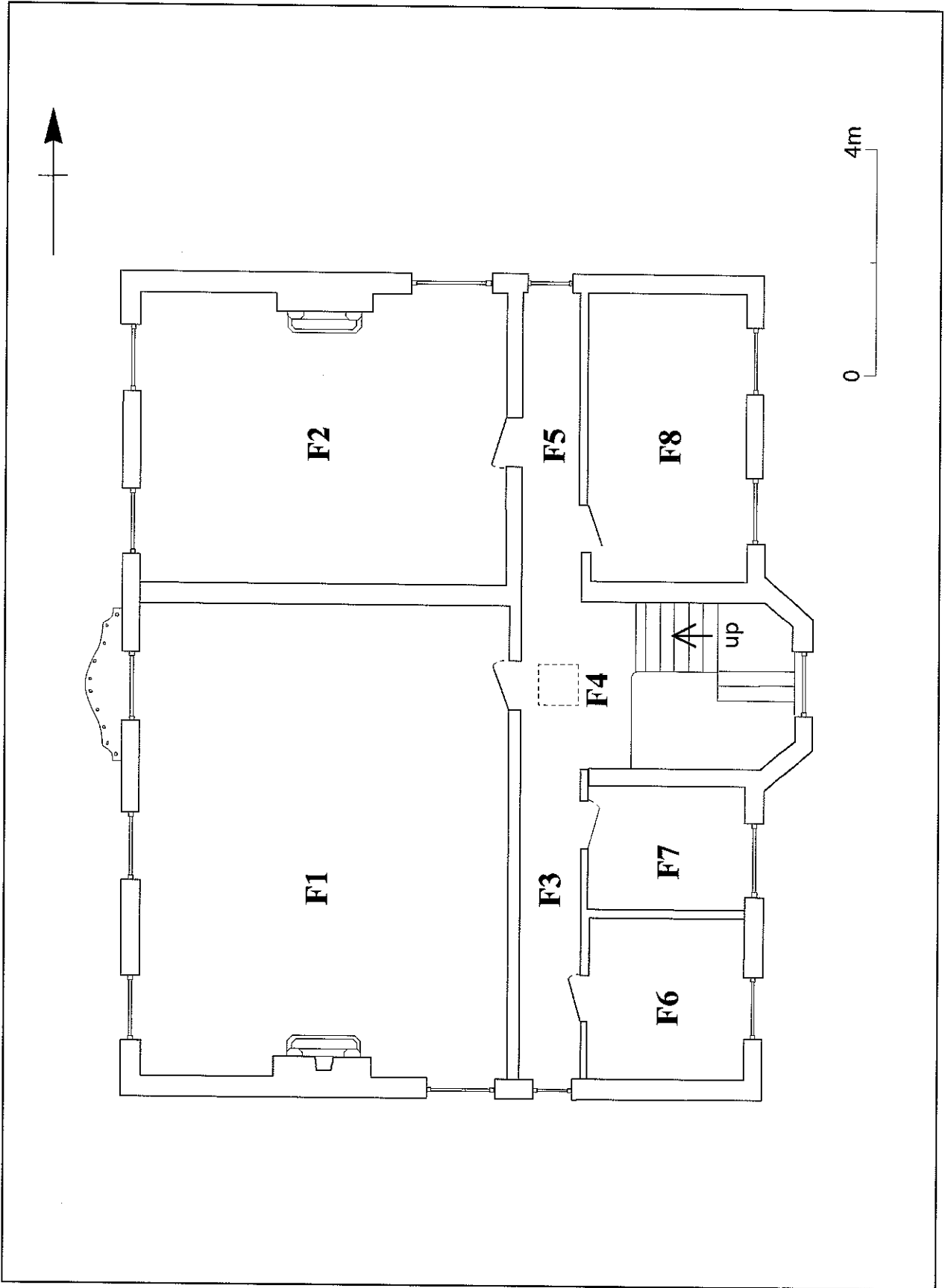


Fig.9

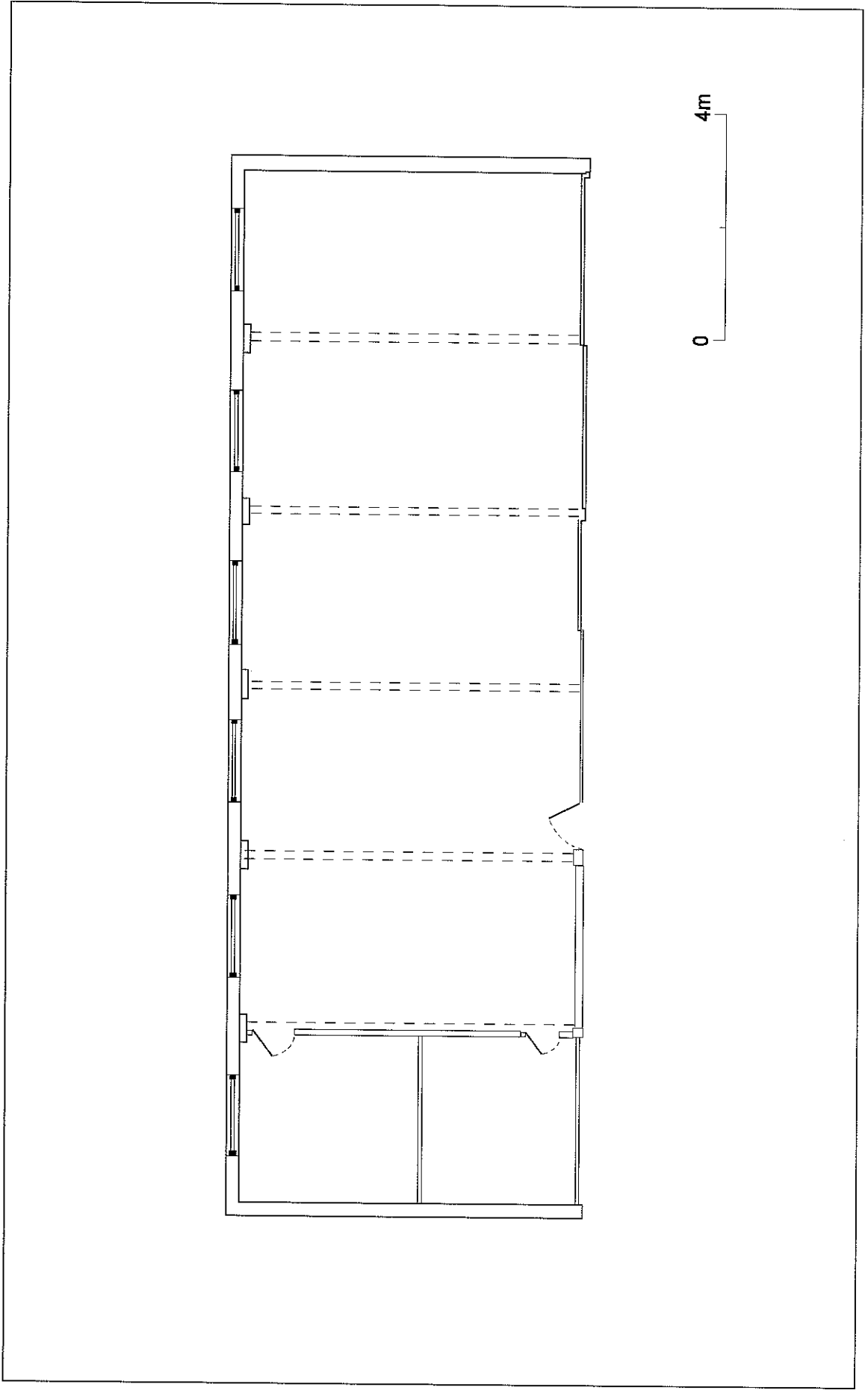


Fig.10

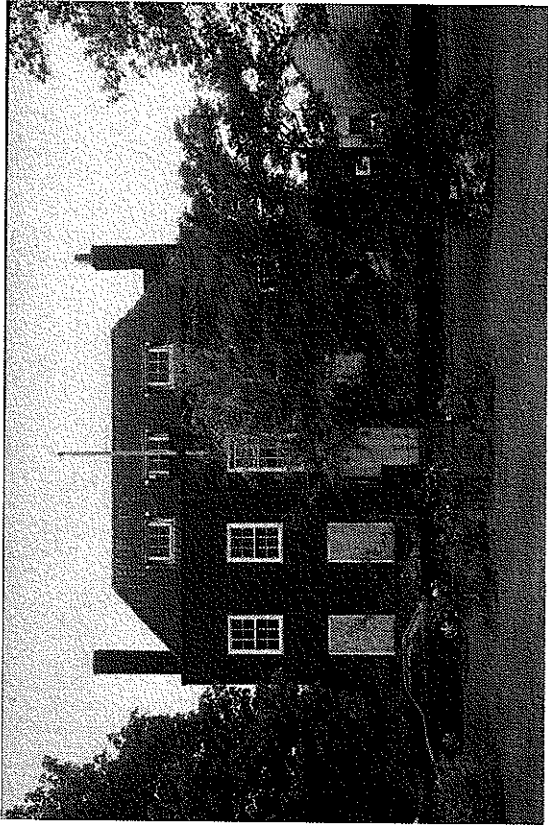


Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3

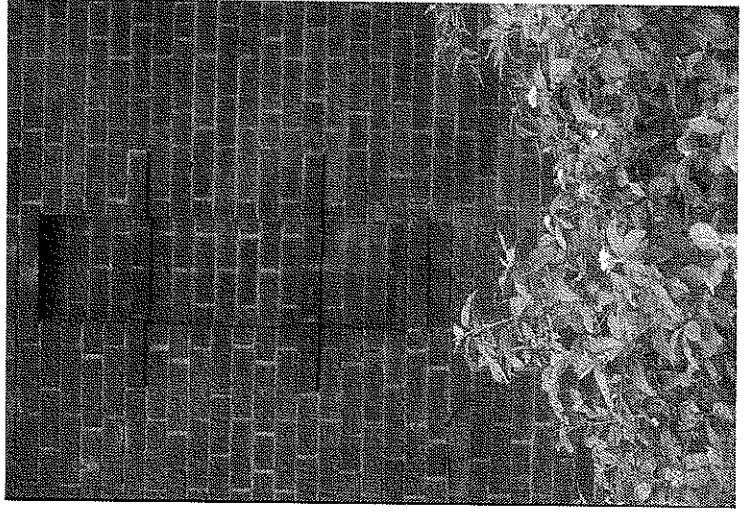


Plate 4

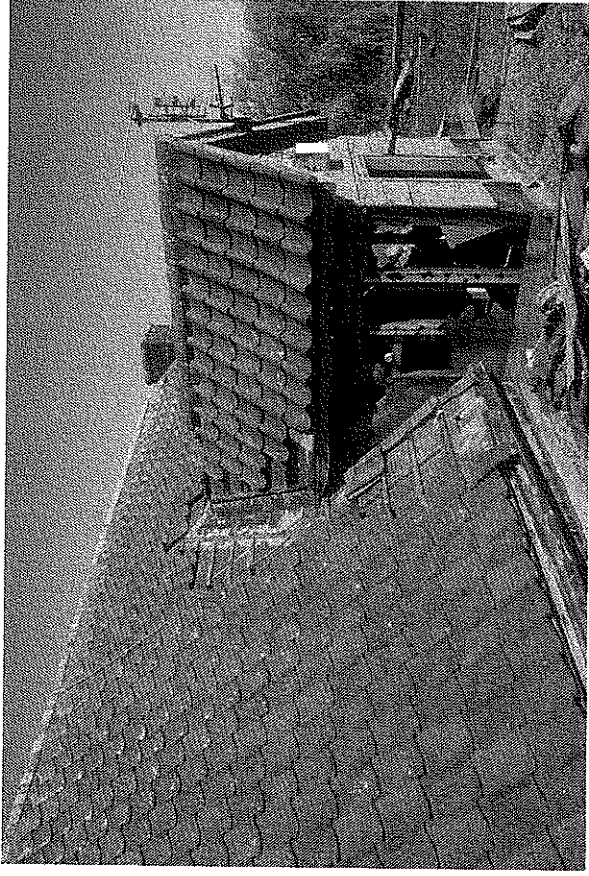


Plate 6

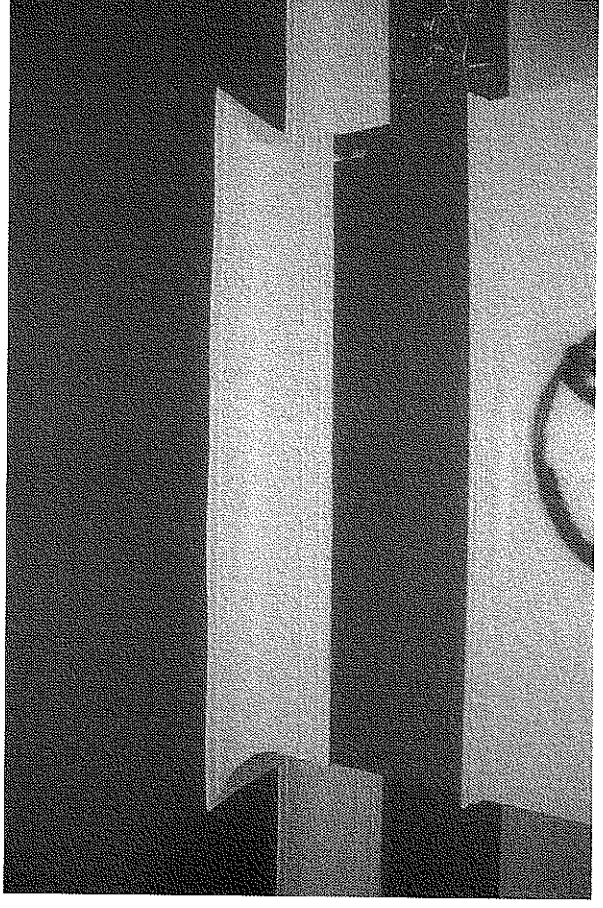


Plate 8

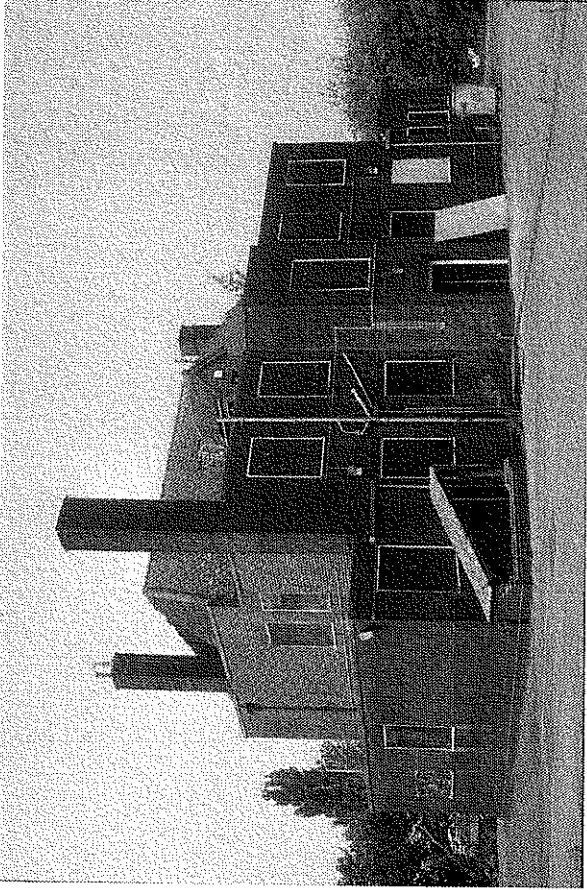


Plate 5

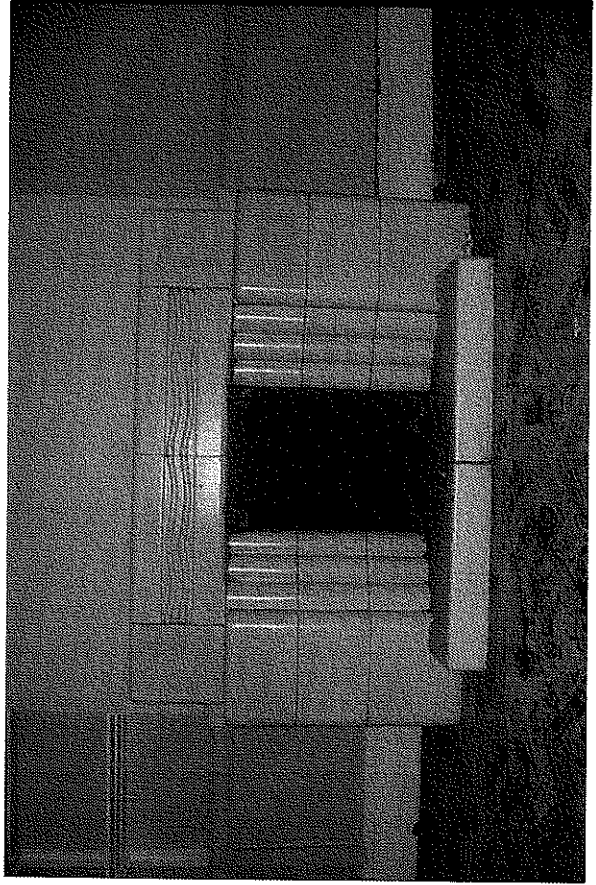


Plate 7

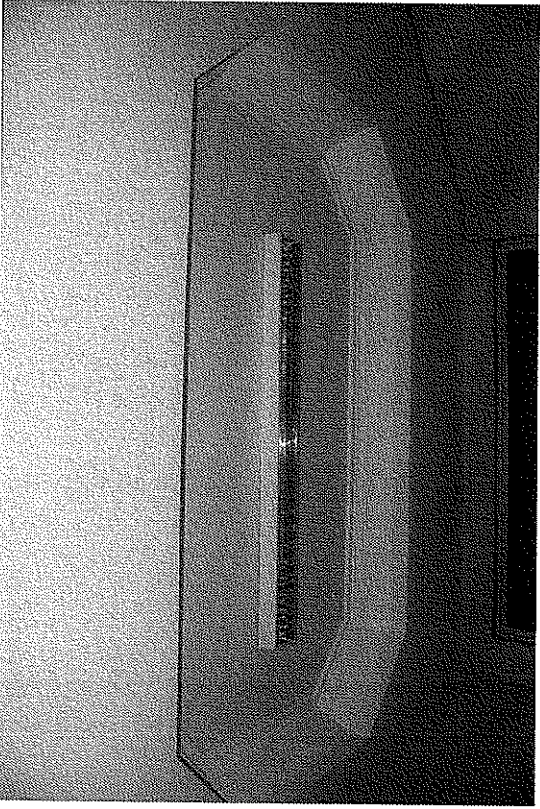


Plate 9



Plate 10

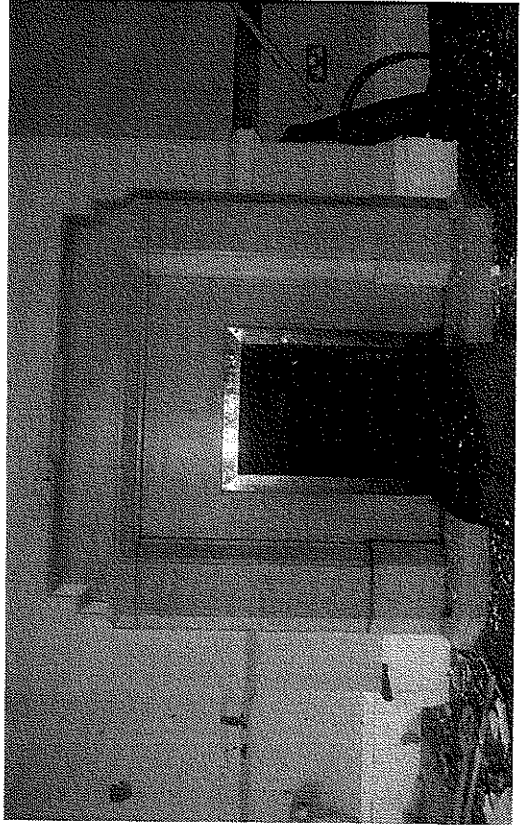


Plate 11

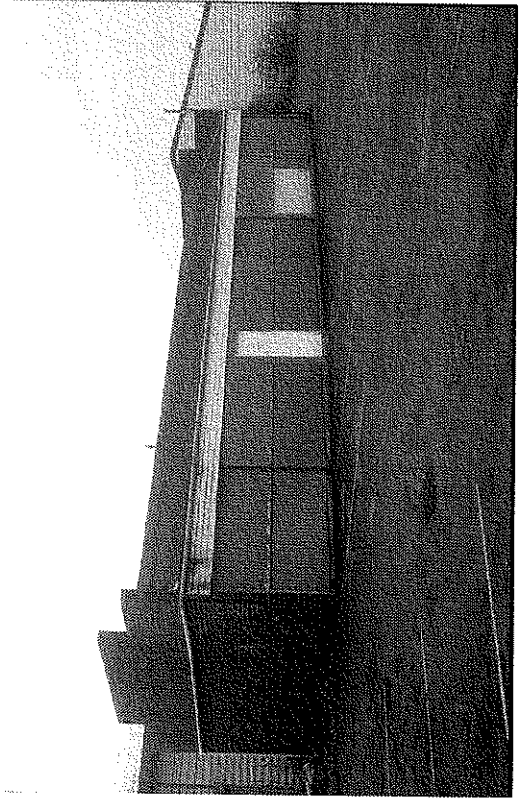


Plate 12



Plate 14

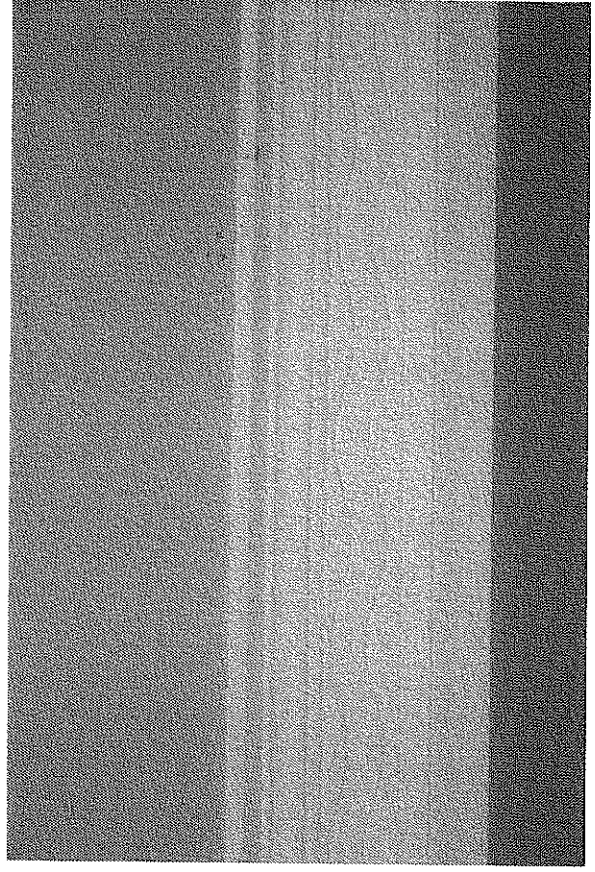


Plate 15

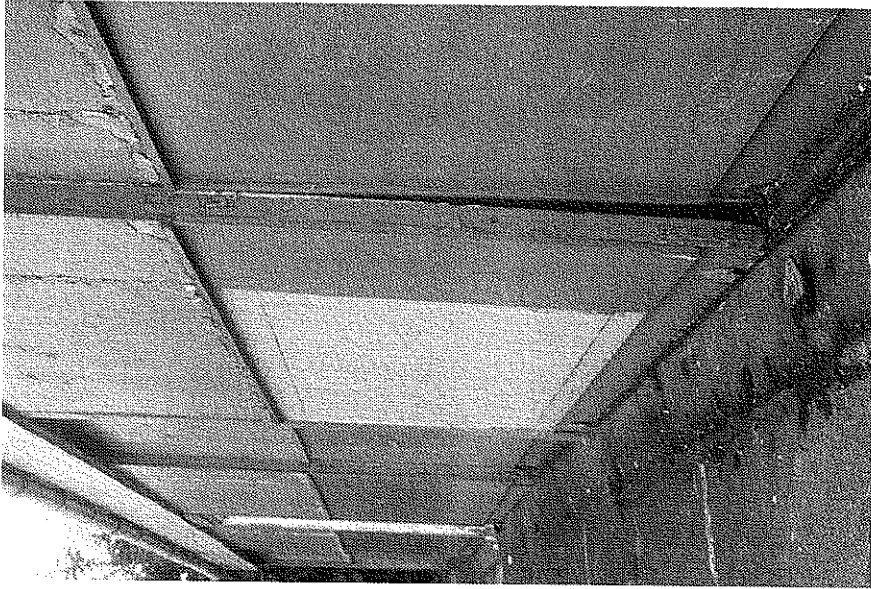


Plate 13