

# SWARTHMOOR MEETING HOUSE, MEETING HOUSE LANE, SWARTHMOOR, ULVERSTON, CUMBRIA

Archaeological Building Recording



Client:  
Swarthmoor Area Meeting

NGR: 328373 476881

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## Non-Technical Summary

Prior the submission of a planning application for the renovation of Swarthmoor Meeting House, Meeting House Lane, Swarthmoor, Ulverston, Cumbria, it was recommended that an archaeological building recording be carried out. The Meeting House is Listed Grade II\* and it was considered necessary to better understand its historical development and significance in order to inform any future planning decision. Following the provision of a project design by Greenlane Archaeology the work on site was carried out in March 2012.

The historical development of the Meeting House is of particular interest due to its association with George Fox and the early history of the Quaker movement. The Meeting House was registered as a place of worship in 1689 and was most likely converted from an existing property on land acquired for that purpose by George Fox in 1687. Despite the history of the site being well known, a detailed record of its structure has not previously been carried out.

The earliest part of the building appears to comprise the block housing the meeting room and two story domestic section with a large projecting chimney. The dating of this is uncertain but it is likely to have its origins in at least the 16<sup>th</sup> century and comprised a barn at the north-west end, with a large doorway in the south-west elevation, and perhaps a cross-passage between this and the domestic end. The subsequent creation of the meeting house seems to have utilised much of the original building, but it seems likely that it was raised in height to provide more space. In addition, a porch was added to the front entrance, and latterly a stable added to the south-east end; the records also record a kiln was present but its exact position is unknown. In the subsequent centuries further alterations were also carried out, although many were relatively minor. At least one previous consideration of the development of the building considered it likely that the partition walls with shutters were added in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the style of their construction suggests they might be much earlier, perhaps belonging to the initial creation of the meeting house. A notable alteration, in 1829, was the removal of some original Gothic style windows and replacement with large sash casements. The dating of the earlier windows is uncertain, but they too could suggest an early date for the original building. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the building may have fallen into something of a state of disrepair, but it was again modified in 1936, when the stairs and some of the panelling were renewed, and by the 1980s a new extension to form the current toilet and kitchen block was constructed and the former stable block converted to form further meeting space.

The building represents a potentially significant site as it appears to contain elements that might be late medieval or early post-medieval in date, as well as remains relating to its conversion into a Quaker meeting house in the 1680s, some elements of which can be seen to correspond to the specification given by George Fox. Additional investigation of the building, specifically dendrochronology, would be essential in confirming the phases of its development, but further investigation following the removal of any substantial areas of external render or internal plaster would also be of use in this regard.

## Acknowledgements

Greenlane Archaeology would like to thank Swarthmoor Area Meeting for commissioning the project, in particular Martin Riley, who also provided a considerable amount of additional information about the history of the building, including from sources still held in the archives at Swarthmoor Hall (but due to be deposited with Cumbria Archives), and assistance during the recording, and John Coward Architects, in particular Mike Darwell, for providing the 'as existing' drawings of the building. Additional thanks are due to the staff of the Cumbria Record Office in Barrow-in-Furness (CRO(B)) and Ulverston Library for their help. Further thanks are also due to Margaret Bailey for her useful comments.

The desk-based assessment was carried out by Dan Elsworth, and the building recording by Dan Elsworth and Tom Mace, who co-wrote the report. The illustrations were produced by Tom Mace, Dan Elsworth managed the project, and Jo Dawson edited the report.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Circumstances of the Project

1.1.1 Prior to the submission of a planning application for the renovation of Swarthmoor Meeting House, Meeting House Lane, Swarthmoor, Ulverston, Cumbria (NGR 328373 476881), Mike Darwell at John Coward Architects suggested that an archaeological building recording be carried out. The building recording is intended to provide supporting information for any subsequent planning application and a better understanding of the building's development and significance. Greenlane Archaeology was contacted by Martin Riley on behalf of the Swarthmoor Area Meeting (hereafter 'the client') and in response to this produced a project design for an English Heritage Level 2/3-type recording of the building. Greenlane Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the recording which was undertaken in March 2012.

1.1.2 The meeting house is Listed Grade II\* and so is of national historical importance and statutorily protected (see *Appendix 1*). According to the Listed Building details, the land was acquired by George Fox in 1687 specifically for the purpose of creating a meeting house (English Heritage 2007), although the evidence suggests that it was formed through the conversion of an existing property on the site (Gaythorpe 1906). Its history has already been outlined in several sources (e.g. Gaythorpe 1906; Butler 1978; 1999, 340-341; Southall n.d. 3-4), but no detailed examination of the structure has been carried out.

## 1.2 Location, Geology, and Topography

1.2.1 Swarthmoor Meeting House is located on the south-east side of the town of Ulverston at approximately 47m above sea level (Ordnance Survey 2005; Figure 1). Swarthmoor Hall, where the Quaker movement was founded by George Fox in 1652, is located c700m to the north-west of Swarthmoor Meeting House, on the outskirts of the village of Swarthmoor. The village of Swarthmoor is located approximately 1km to the south-east of Ulverston.

1.2.2 Ulverston is on the boundary between the West Cumbria coastal plain and the higher ground of the Furness Fells to the north; the solid geology is typically made up of Bannisdale slates (Taylor *et al* 1971, plate XIII; Moseley 1978, plate 1), and this is overlain by a drift geology made up of glacially-derived tills comprising gravels and clays (Countryside Commission 1998, 66).

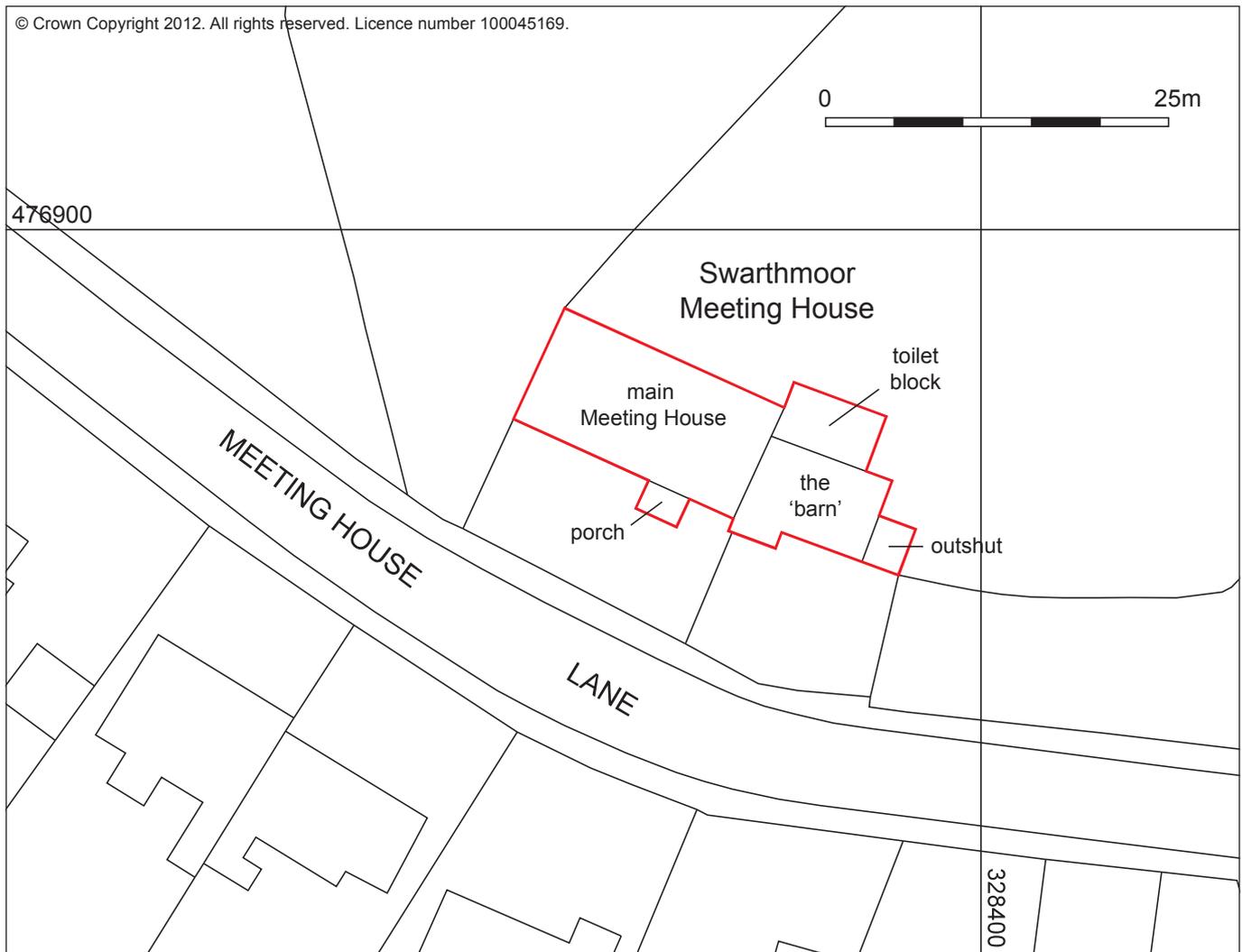
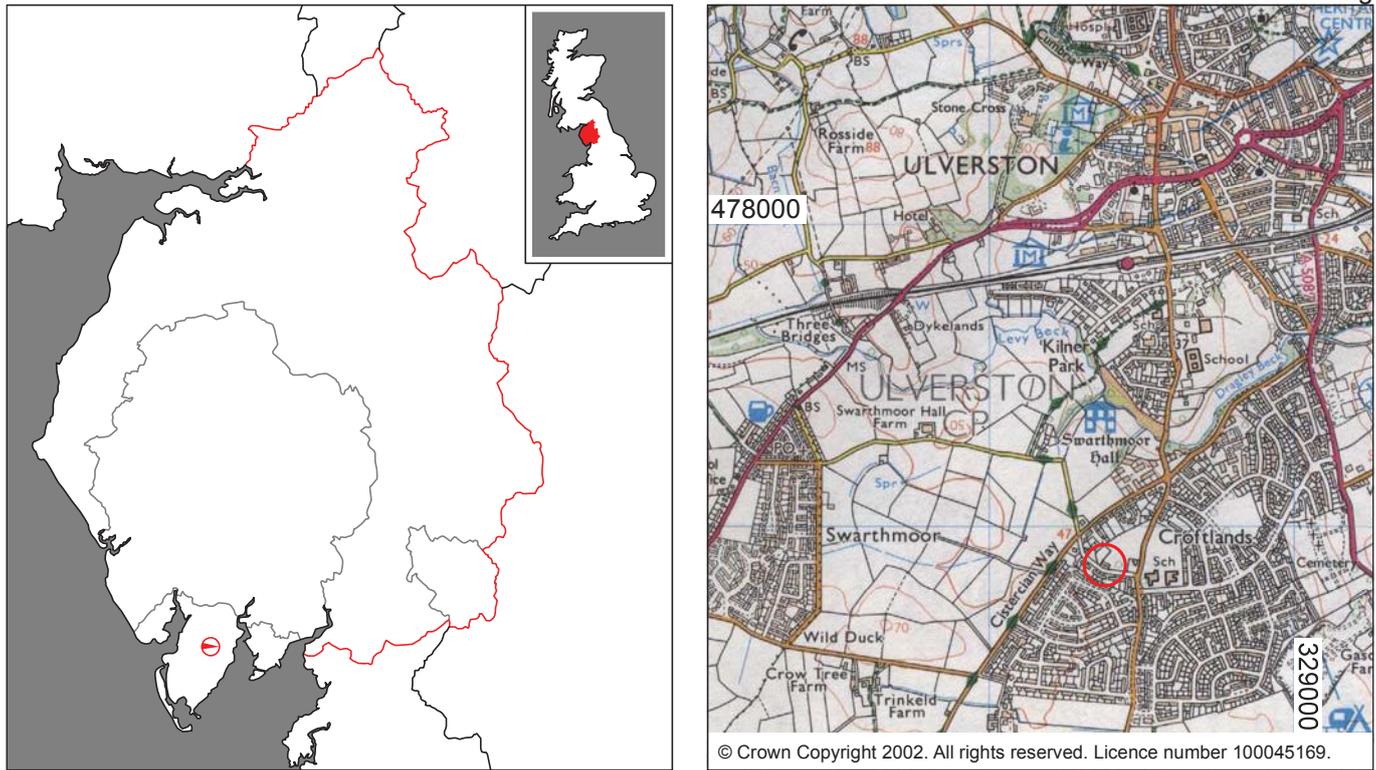


Figure 1: Site location

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The building investigation comprised three separate elements intended to provide a suitable record of the structure, in line with English Heritage standards (English Heritage 2006) and the guidelines of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008a). In addition a desk-based assessment was carried out in accordance with the project design and IfA guidelines (IfA 2008b) prior to the building recording, and a suitable archive was compiled to provide a permanent record of the project and its results in accordance with English Heritage and IfA guidelines (English Heritage 1991; Brown 2007).

### 2.2 Desk-Based Assessment

2.2.1 Information was gathered from the following locations:

- **Cumbria Record Office, Barrow (CRO(B))**: this was visited in order to examine early maps of the site and other primary sources as well as secondary sources such as trade directories in order to identify information about the development and use of the building;
- **Information from the client**: a compilation of available sources (comprising original sources in the CRO(B), documents held at Swarthmoor Hall and published records) relating to the meeting house was also provided by Martin Riley, and this was utilised in the production of the site history (*Section 3.2*);
- **Ulverston Library, Local Studies Collection**: secondary sources held here were also consulted in order to provide information for the historical background;
- **Greenlane Archaeology library**: additional secondary sources were used to provide information for the site background.

### 2.3 Building Recording

2.3.1 The building recording was carried out to English Heritage Level-2/3 type standards (English Heritage 2006), which is a relatively detailed form of investigation intended to record the form, function and phasing of the building, incorporating the results of the desk-based assessment. The recording comprised the following elements:

- **Written record**: descriptive records of all parts of the building were made using Greenlane Archaeology *pro forma* record sheets;
- **Photographs**: photographs in both 35mm colour print and colour digital format were taken of the main features of the building, its general surroundings, and any features of architectural or archaeological interest. A selection of the colour digital photographs is included in this report, and the remaining photographs are in the project archive;
- **Drawings**: drawings were produced by hand-annotation of printed plots of 'as existing' architect's drawings provided by the client's architect. In addition, scale drawings were produced by hand of a sample of the mullion windows and the sandstone trough to the south-east side of the porch. The drawings produced ultimately comprised:
  - i. all of the external elevations, at scale of 1:100;
  - ii. a plan of each floor, at a scale of 1:100;
  - iii. cross-sections, at a scale of 1:50;
  - iv. architectural features and features of interest at a scale of 1:10.

## 2.4 Archive

2.4.1 A comprehensive archive of the project has been produced in accordance with the project design and current IfA and English Heritage guidelines (Brown 2007; English Heritage 1991). The paper and digital archive and a copy of this report will be deposited in the Cumbria Record Office in Barrow-in-Furness on completion of the project. Three copies of this report will be provided for the client, and one will be retained by Greenlane Archaeology. In addition a digital copy of the report will be provided to client's agent and the Cumbria Historic Environment Record (HER) in Kendal and a digital record of the project will be made on the *Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) scheme.

### 3. Desk-Based Assessment

#### 3.1 Map and Image Regression

3.1.1 **Introduction:** early maps of the area tend to be relatively lacking in detail and are certainly not specific enough to be useful in understanding the development of the property. Swarthmoor is also too far outside of Ulverston to have been depicted on Wood's plan of 1832, which is the most detailed early map of the town. The earliest useful maps are therefore only from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Similarly, while there are various early illustrations and photographs of the meeting house, the earliest discovered during the desk-based assessment was from c1843.

3.1.2 **Jopling, c1843:** this image of the front (south-west) elevation, reproduced by Jopling (1843, 175), is undated but cannot post-date 1843 (Plate 1). It essentially shows the building as it is now, although there is clearly some artistic licence as the elevation is considerably shorter than it actually is. The three main windows are apparently 32-light sash casements, and all but one of the mullion windows to the south-east are shown; the missing one probably hidden by the side of the porch. There is an off-centre flue projecting through the roof and a doorway in the barn attached to the south-east. The porch shows some differences but these are again probably due to the interpretation of the artist, although the arrangement of the inscription above the door to the porch does appear to be slightly different to what is now present.

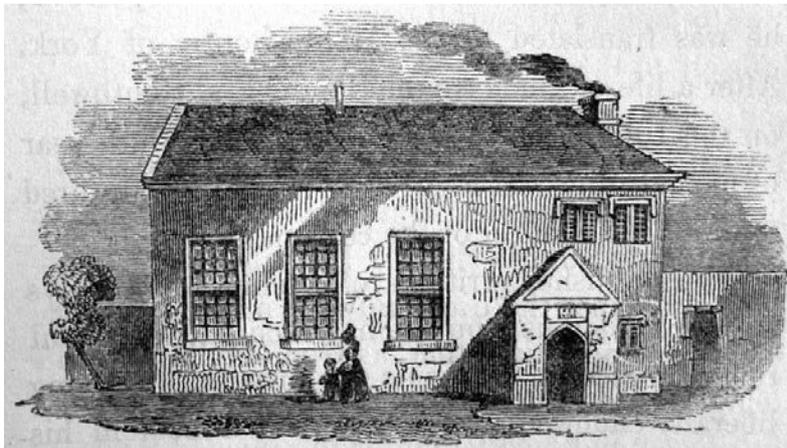


Plate 1: Illustration of Swarthmoor Meeting House (from Jopling 1843, 175)

3.1.3 **Ordnance Survey, 1851:** the 'Quaker's Meeting House' is shown at the site on the 1851 edition of the Ordnance Survey and the graveyard is clearly marked to the north and west (Plate 2). The main elements of the current Meeting House are present, including the Main Meeting House, with the porch to the south-west side, and the 'barn' to the south-east. Another structure may be shown to the north-east side of the linear block formed by the 'barn' and the main Meeting House, but this is unclear at the scale at which this map was produced. Rake Head is marked further to the north-west.

3.1.4 **Ordnance Survey, 1894:** the edition of the Ordnance Survey mapping which was printed in 1894 (reproduced here; see Plate 3), was actually surveyed between 1888 and 1889. It shows a similar arrangement of buildings at the site, then called the 'Friends' Meeting House', but the division between the main Meeting House and the 'barn' is clearly shown and the outshut (?) to the south-east side of the linear block is also shown as two separate sections, the furthest section being butted by the boundary wall to the south-west. The burial ground is still marked and the various boundaries appear unchanged and a pump is shown in the grounds to the rear.

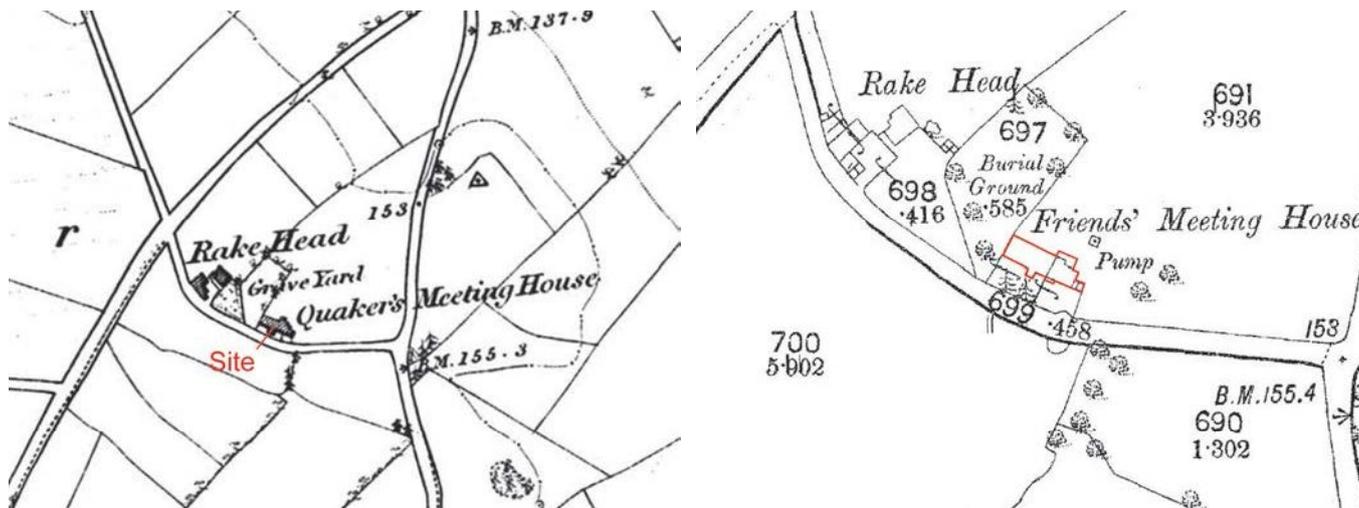


Plate 2 (left): Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1851

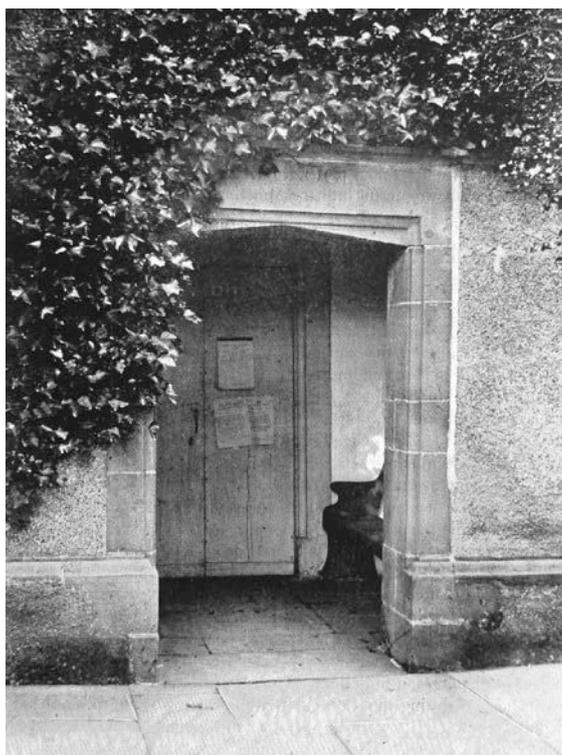
Plate 3 (right): Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1894

3.1.5 **Barber, c1894**: like the previous early illustration (Plate 1), this view is also undated but cannot post-date its publication in 1894 (Barber 1894, 252). Again some artistic licence has clearly been used, but this otherwise appears to show much the same detail as the earlier illustration (Plate 4, cf. Plate 1). The three main windows are depicted with 20-light casements, which is perhaps more realistic, the flue through the roof is shown and the porch and mullion windows are depicted as before. In addition, the hung slate is shown at the north-west end and the boundary garden walls butting against the elevation with their gates are also shown.



Plate 4 (left): Illustration of c1894 (from Barber 1894, 252)

3.1.6 **Ayre, c1895**: these two photographs of the exterior, reproduced by Ayre (1895, 166 and 169) show relatively little, but they demonstrate that the building had essentially reached its present form by this date. The obvious difference is that the main windows are shown and appear to correspond with those in the slightly earlier drawing in having 16 or 20-lights.



**Plate 5 (left): View of the north-west and south-west elevations (from Ayre 1895, 166 and 169)**

**Plate 6 (right): View of the porch (from Ayre 1895)**

3.1.7 **Late 19<sup>th</sup> century photographs:** a collection of late 19<sup>th</sup> century photographs of various meeting houses includes two of the Swarthmoor Meeting House (CRO(B) BDFCF/1/128 19<sup>th</sup> century – 1971). One, of the outside of the porch, shows the porch much as it appears today (Plate 7; cf. Plate 15), although it is currently much less overgrown. A late 19<sup>th</sup> century photograph taken inside the main Meeting House shows the shutters and partitions as well as the double door to the south-east side of the main meeting room (Plate 16). The panelling along the north-east elevation does not appear to have vertical struts as it does now and the floor has since been carpeted over. The flue from a heater (which is no longer there) is visible in the centre of the shot.



**Plate 7 (left): Late 19<sup>th</sup> century photograph of the porch (from CRO(B) BDFCF/1/128 19<sup>th</sup> century – 1971)**

**Plate 8 (right): Late 19<sup>th</sup> century photograph of the inside of Swarthmoor Meeting House (from CRO(B) BDFCF/1/128 19<sup>th</sup> century – 1971)**

3.1.8 **Ordnance Survey, 1913:** the arrangement of the Friends' Meeting House is unchanged by 1913 (Plate 9).

3.1.9 **Plan of 1929:** this map shows an area of land to the east of the Meeting House for sale for building purposes (Plate 10), and is almost certainly based on a contemporary Ordnance Survey map. The map also shows much of the Swarthmoor Hall Estate and the site for the Ulverston Hospital further to the north. The pink area relates to Pelty's Croft Estate and the plot to be leased is edged in red. The outline of the outshut to the south-east side of the Meeting House is unfilled and the area which elsewhere in this report is referred to as the 'barn' is labelled 'Stables'. It appears that the kitchen and toilet block have still yet to be built.

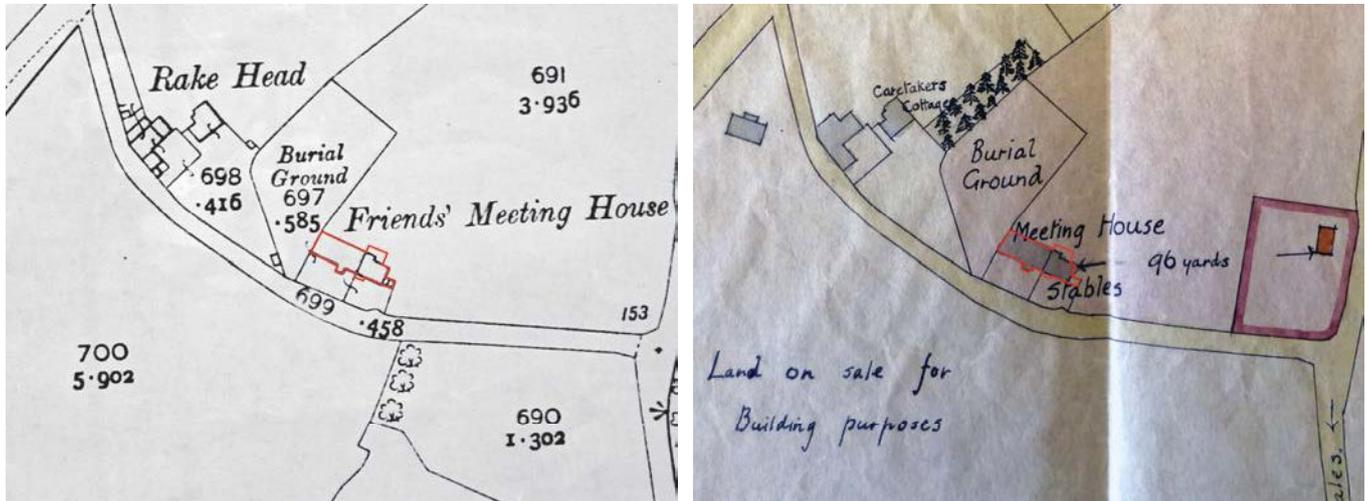


Plate 9 (left): Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1913

Plate 10 (right): Extract from the plan of 1929 (CRO(B) BDFCF/1/134 1929)

3.1.10 **20<sup>th</sup> century illustrations:** the photograph used by Lidbetter (1995, plate v), presumably taken prior to 1961, of the main meeting room (Plate 11) is of particular interest as it shows the position of the benches at this time, and also the presence of a free-standing stove on the north side of the room. In addition, hand-drawn illustrations in Butler (1978, 125), show the south-west side of the Meeting House and the inside of the main Meeting Room much as they appear today (Plate 12 and Plate 13).



Plate 11: Photograph of the main meeting room from pre-1961 (from Lidbetter 1995, plate v)



Plate 12 (left): Illustrations of the front (south-west) elevation of the Meeting House (Butler 1978, 125)

Plate 13 (right): Illustration of internal details at the north-west end of the main Meeting House (Butler 1978, 125)

## 3.2 Site History

**3.2.1 Introduction:** while the town of Ulverston and its local environs have a very ancient history, with activity extending into the prehistoric and Roman period, Swarthmoor Meeting House is thought to be of 17<sup>th</sup> century in origin. As a result only information relating to the post-medieval period has been included in this section, specifically that relating directly to the meeting house. In addition, the history of the site has been discussed by several previous authors, most notably Harper Gaythorpe, whose account published in 1906 is arguably the most detailed. As a result, it is possible to build on these existing accounts through the incorporation of new sources.

**3.2.2 Early History:** the recorded history of Swarthmoor Meeting House places its origins in a piece of land named 'Petty's Croft'. The origins of this are unclear but certainly appear to be at least 16<sup>th</sup> century. A dispute of 1538-1539 relating to land at 'Swarthmore', apparently between the Nevilles (presumably of Neville Hall in Ulverston) and the purchaser of the Conishead Priory estates, describes the boundary of the disputed area, and includes the house of Edward Petye (Fishwick 1897, 101; Anon 1899; Gaythorpe 1906, 237; CRO(B) BAMH/2/55 n.d.). An Edward Pettie is later recorded in the Ulverston parish registers as having been buried in 1551, and another in 1555 (Gaythorpe 1906, 238). In 1574 it is recorded that an attempt was made to dispossess a Richard Pytye [*sic*], lessee of Sir Robert Neville, of lands in Swarthmore and further members of the Pettie [*sic*] family are subsequently recorded in the Ulverston parish registers (*ibid*). As can be seen from these numerous references, the Petty family were connected with Swarthmoor for over 100 years from at least the early 16<sup>th</sup> century to the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, and although they evidently held property in the area it is not clear what this comprised.

**3.2.3 Late 17<sup>th</sup> century:** the establishment of a Quaker meeting house on the site is recorded as occurring in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, when George Fox is said to have purchased Petty's Croft sometime between 1674 and 1687 (Gaythorpe 1906, 238). It is stated by Gaythorpe that it was acquired from Susanna and Rachel Fell, the youngest daughters of Judge Fell but the conveyance says that it was bought from the estate of John Pettye and had been rented by Susanna and Rachel (Penney 1911, 362). Between the end of 1686 and 1687 George Fox granted the property to the Quakers for use as a meeting house (Gaythorpe 1906, 238; quoting from CRO(B) BDFCF/1/71 1676-1748). The conveyance of 1687, between George Fox and John Rouse, Thomas Lower, William Mead and Daniel Abraham (all his sons in law), John Haydock, Roger Haydock, Leonard Ffell, and Thomas Dockra describes the property only as a '*Mansion or dwelling house, barne, kilne, garth [enclosure], onset [outshut] , and one Close of land called the Croft lyeing on the east side of the said dwelling house Containing by estimation nine roods or thereabouts, and all that meadow lyeing on the North west side of the houses and barne,*

*containing by estimation half an acre or thereabouts'* (Penney 1911, 362). While this gives only limited information about the buildings, it does demonstrate that they comprised not only a house but also a barn and kiln.

3.2.4 A collection of other material contained in the *Book of Pious Uses* (CRO(B) BDFCF/1/71 1676-1748), elements of which are published elsewhere, contains a considerable amount of information about George Fox's intentions for the former Petty's Croft. A letter dated 1686-7 to one of his sons in law, Thomas Lower, states: *'I do offer and give up freely to the Lord for ever, and for the service of His sons and daughters, and servants called Quakers, the houses, barns, kiln, stable, and all the land, with the garden and orchard, being about three acres of land, more or less; with all the commonings, peats, turfings, moss, and whatsoever other privileges that belong to it called Pettis at Swarthmore in the parish of Ulverstone'* (*op cit*, 238-239 – citing Webb 1865, 341-342). He also granted his ebony bedstead, a chair, and sea-case with bottles in it so that they could *'stand in the house as heir-looms when the house is made use of for a meeting place'* (*op cit*, 239). Of perhaps more interest in terms of the ways in which the building changed as a result of George Fox's acquisition is his description of how it should be modified and maintained:

*'The land is free from all tithes, and it may keep the meeting-house in order and repair. It is all the land and house I have in England, and it is given up to the Lord, for God's people to meet in when they do not meet at Swathmore Hall. Let the rent of the ground and malt-house maintain the meeting-house, which may be made fit, either the barn or the house, as the Lord shall let Friends see which is best. Slate it, and pave the way to it, and about it, that friends may go dry to their meeting. You may let any poor honest Friend live in part of the house...'* (*op cit*, 240).

*'if the barn will do better; if you could make it wider, may be it may be better, because there will be the house to go into.*

*The ground and the yards are low and may be so raised that you may go up a step or two into the meeting-house; and you have stones enough and poor men to get them.*

*I would have a porch made to the meeting-place, on the common side from the yard; and I would have the meeting-place large, for truth may increase'* (*ibid*).

3.2.5 George Fox also gave money to enable alterations to be carried out, either £20 or £40, and also more specifically suggested that the existing thatched roof be pulled off and *'laid in a heap to rot for manure'* so that the building could be slated (CRO(B) BDFCF/1/71 1676-1748). He also suggested that the barn be made *'as wide again, which you may do with pillars or otherwise'* (Gaythorpe 1906, 240). It is not clear what, if any of these alterations were actually carried out to his specifications. A letter from William Meades to Margaret Fox, dated 10<sup>th</sup> April 1687, refers to slates being provided at that time by Thomas Lower for the *'repair of Pettis'* (*op cit*, 241). Gaythorpe concluded that the original building must have been pulled down and rebuilt in order to withstand the weight of the newly slated roof (*ibid*), although the fact that slate is being brought to repair it perhaps suggests this is not the case. That fact the new meeting house was registered for use by 1689 (LRO DDKE/acc. 7840 HMC/712 1689) and in regular use by 1690 (Gaythorpe 1906, 242, citing William Close in West 1805, 404) also perhaps suggests that it was not comprehensively rebuilt. Indeed, Gaythorpe seems to contradict himself in stating that the old house was left standing as it was occupied by Leonard and Mary Fell in c1698 (Gaythorpe 1906, 243). Information specifically about the early use of the building is generally lacking, but the sources indicates that as early as 1697 James Goad was using part of it as a school room (CRO(B) BDFCF/2/16-17 1699-1722). It is also suggested that the original conversion of 1688 included a separate women's meeting house (Lidbetter 1995, 15), something that had been encouraged from as early as 1670 (Ross 1949), although there is no specific evidence for this. In 1690 Margaret Fox requested a specific addition to the new meeting house, requesting that a John Bell create a seat *'so broad that it will hold a seat round about, that one may sit of [sic] both sides'* (Gaythorpe 1906, 243; citing Webb 1865, 361).

3.2.6 **18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century:** documentary references to the meeting house in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century are less frequent and, during the 18<sup>th</sup> century at least, it is not clear if any further alterations

were made. Later deeds dated 1724, 1726 and 1756 conveyed the property to subsequent groups of Friends '*persuant to George Fox's lease and release of 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> September, 1687*' (Gaythorpe 1906, 241; CRO(B) BDFCF/1/79 1756-1912). One of the earliest accounts of the meeting house comes from this period; William Fell, an 11 year old boy, visited the site in 1777 and gave the following description:

*'I shall tell the Reader, if his has a Mind strengthened by Christianity, to go and see this ancient Building. He must look up over the outward door of a Porch, where he must read in large capital letters; but he must have good Eyes, for it is a deal worn out by that destructive Weapon called Time; it is EX DONO G.F., - the Gift of George Fox.'* (Ayre 1887, 9).

3.2.7 Harper Gaythorpe examined the accounts relating to the meeting house during the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, most of which do not specifically relate to the building itself, although in 1792 various pieces of work seem to have been carried out including the cropping of trees and whitewashing (Gaythorpe 1906, 250-251). Of perhaps more interest is the reference to work carried out by J. Dodgson at the meeting house, for which he was paid £9 12s 4½d, and a further reference to repairs and painting (*op cit*, 251). It is not stated what this work entailed, but Dodgson is thought to have been a cabinet-maker and Gaythorpe suggests that he may have been providing extra seating or carrying out alterations to increase the size of the meeting house (*ibid*). Between 1797 and 1800 alterations were also made to the grounds; fir trees were removed and sold and a new wall erected, considered by Gaythorpe to be the wall '*extending from the corner of the highway to the meeting-house, and now bounding Petty Croft on the south*' (*op cit*, 251-252). The accounts indicate that a considerable amount of alteration was carried out in 1813 and 1814, with a total of £175 spent in this period (*op cit*, 253). Gaythorpe suggests that this was due to the fact that the building was used for multiple meetings and therefore relates to '*the additions of the panelled partitions, with wooden flaps and sliding doors [that could be opened to extend the main meeting house], and other internal and external work including the removal of the old-fashioned family pew... which Margaret Fox ordered John Bell to make in 1690*' (*ibid*), although there is no specific proof for this given. The early accounts from the time do not appear to provide any further information (CRO(B) BDFCF/1/228-231/1 1744-1852). Further repairs were also carried out in the 1820s, although again the details are unclear (*ibid*; Gaythorpe 1906, 255-256). One alteration to the site that is recorded is the creation of a boundary wall; elements of this appear to have been started as early as 1800 and not completed until 1835 (Gaythorpe 1906, 256). In addition a hot air stove and 18 feet of pipe were purchased in 1825, indicating that some form of additional heating was added, most probably in the meeting room (*op cit*, 257), and this is probably what can be seen projecting through the roof in the early illustrations (Plate 1 and Plate 4).

3.2.8 The one significant change to the building during this period that can apparently be identified with any certainty is the installation of the three large windows in the south-west elevation. This modification involved the removal of what were described as '*the ancient windows*' and replacement with 24-light sliding sash casements, for which William Benson was paid £26 19s 7d on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1829 (*op cit*, 257-259). The original windows were apparently '*of debased Gothic form made of deal or some soft wood*', with plain pointed arches 4' 7½" by 3' 2¼" (*op cit*, 258). On removal from the meeting house they were apparently used at Stewnor Bank Farm near Ireleth, when it was built in 1830, where a similar window was recorded as being present the attic (*op cit*, 258-259). This window is said to have been taken from Conishead Priory, but, rather confusingly, said to have derived from when it (Conishead) was rebuilt in about 1763 in a Gothic style (*op cit*, 259); the assumption presumably being that the windows from the meeting house were similarly 'Gothic revival' rather than original Gothic. The windows at Stewnor Bank were re-examined in 1955 by members of the Barrow Naturalists' Field Club, by which time the farmhouse was derelict, and judged to be '*of little architectural interest*' (Calvert 1963, 41). To add to the confusion, Gaythorpe refers to four windows of this type at the meeting house of which three were apparently replaced (*ibid*). Further external alterations were also made, greatly altering the character of the building, including covering north-west end and part of the south-west elevation with slate in 1843 (CRO(B) BDFCF/1/228-231/1 1789-1846; Butler 1978, 124). Butler also suggests that the remaining walls were rendered shortly after this, although no source is given (1978, 124).

**3.2.9 Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century:** the available photographs from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (see Plate 5 to Plate 8) show that the building had essentially reached its present form by this time, although the accounts suggest that regular repairs were made, even if the details are not specific (CRO(B) BDFCF/1/228-231/2 1846-1885). Contemporary descriptions add a limited amount of further detail. Of particular interest is the presence of two ebony bedposts which were said to '*stand within the passage, and serve as jambs in a doorway leading to the gallery*' (Tweddell 1870, 190; Barber 1894, 254; see also Ayre 1896, 212). These were part of the bedstead granted by George Fox with the building and were said to be towards the end of the passage (Gaythorpe 1906, 239 and 260-261; see Section 3.2.4 above). It is also suggested that the fireplace, in what was described as the cloak room, was originally much wider (Gaythorpe states it was 6' 6" wide; 1906, 261), having been reduced in size to accommodate a smaller grate and said to incorporate a piece of ogee-moulded mullion window (*ibid*; an observation repeated by Butler 1978, 124). Early 20<sup>th</sup> century alterations seem to have been initially quite limited, and it is possible that building was to some extent falling into disrepair at this time: Gaythorpe states that the south and west sides of the meeting room (presumably meaning the north-west and south-west) are panelled '*but the rest has been removed and not replaced*' (1906, 262). Improvements were made, however, sometime after this. The accounts show that the original stove, which had become unsafe, was replaced in 1935 with the new one positioned against the north-east elevation (see Plate 11), but this was deemed inadequate and replaced almost immediately (CRO(B) BDFCF/1/15 1905-1937). Correspondence between E Mitford Abraham and Harper Gaythorpe's son (the letter was originally written to Harper Gaythorpe himself, but he had died in 1910), regarding his history of the meeting house published in 1906, reveals some additional information (CRO(B) Z/2278 1906-1910). Within it Abraham states that '*we have had the meeting house restored this year: some new panelling, a large part of the minister's gallery new: a new stair-case & stove*' (*ibid*), demonstrating that some substantial improvements were being carried out at this time. Since that time alterations have been largely confined to the former outbuildings to the south-east of the main part of the building. A new kitchen and toilet block was designed and added by 1985 (Swarthmoor Hall Archives 1978-1985) and the former coach house and stables (also referred to as the barn) was converted into a children's room by at least 1987 (Swarthmoor Hall 1981-2006). Following this, further repairs continued to be made over the next decade or more, often in relation to problems with damp, ultimately resulting in the present programme of repairs (*ibid*). These alterations included the replacement of the large sash windows, which were replaced with the present casements 1995 (Swarthmoor Hall Archives 1981-2006).

### 3.4 Conclusion

3.4.1 The known history of the Swarthmoor Meeting House evidently has its origins in a 16<sup>th</sup> century property, although the early records are lacking in detail and it is not clear how this relates to the standing building. Its conversion into the meeting house, which took place in the late 1680s, is also difficult to adequately interpret as there may well have been a considerable gulf between what was suggested should happen in George Fox's initial specification and what actually happened. The later accounts provide a number of specific details of work carried out, but again there are numerous assumptions made, in particular by Harper Gaythorpe, whose account of the site's history is frequently confusing, contradictory and lacking in references. Nevertheless, a considerable amount of information is available and a re-examination of original sources has provided new insights. It is also notable that the earliest commentators on the building did not examine it thoroughly and so the results of the building recording provide a new range of information for use in its interpretation.

## 4. Building Recording

### 4.1 Arrangement and Fabric

4.1.1 Swarthmoor Meeting House effectively forms a large rectangular block, the long side of which faces south-west towards Meeting House Lane (Figure 1). It principally comprises the main Meeting House at the north-west end, with a porch added to the south-west side, and 'the barn' to the south-east, which has been extensively modernised; a small outshut has been added to the south-east end and a toilet block has been added to the north-east side (Figure 3). Externally the building is mostly roughcast concrete rendered, apart from the north-west end which is covered with hung slate (Figure 2). The roof is finished with grey slate and stone ridge tiles and there is a large tiered chimney at the south-east end of the main Meeting House. Most of the main Meeting House at least has a c 0.1m wide plinth at the base and large cobble footings are evident at the corners. The whole block is set within a tall boundary wall to the south-west and there is an open field to the north-east.

### 4.2 External Detail

4.2.1 **South-west elevation:** slate is hung on the north-west side of the south-west elevation of the main Meeting House and it has the same projecting eaves and iron brackets as on the north-east side as well as neatly dressed stone kneelers at the north-west end. There are three large 12-light hinged casement windows with dressed sandstone sills at the north-west end of the elevation and the lintel of the central window has been re-rendered over (Plate 14). The wall of the main Meeting House has a slight plinth along most of its base, although it does not continue below the central window on this section (despite being present either side). To the south-east of these three windows the main Meeting House has a projecting porch (Plate 15). The porch is gabled above the doorway on the south-west side and has a plinth. The doorway has dressed and moulded surrounds and a cavetto-moulded string/drip course above it. An inscription above the door reads 'EXDONO: G.F. 1688' (Plate 16). Immediately to the south-east of the porch on the ground floor are two two-light leaded mullion windows with cavetto moulding (Figure 7) below a single drip mould in the same style as the porch (Plate 17). The north-west mullion is partially obscured by the porch, which is angled to allow light through the window. There is an oddly shaped red sandstone trough on the floor in front of these mullion windows (Plate 18; Figure 3 and Figure 6). The trough is sat on four 'legs' made from pieces of mullion and hood mould – the mullion is a different style to the ones used in the windows however with a curved profile and possibly ovolo-moulding. There are two further two-light hood moulded mullion windows at first floor level, which are stepped to the north-west relative to those on the ground floor. One is located directly above the porch. They appear to have a more square finish and both are covered by projecting eaves.



Plate 14 (left): North-west end of the south-west external elevation



Plate 15 (right): The porch



**Plate 16 (left): Inscription above the porch door**



**Plate 17 (right): Mullion windows at the south-east end of south-west elevation of the main Meeting House**



**Plate 18: Trough to the south-east side of the porch**

4.2.2 The rendered boundary wall attaches to the main Meeting House to the south-east of the mullion windows. The projecting tiered chimney is visible above where the boundary wall butts against the main Meeting House and there is slate capping on the tiers. The doorway through the boundary wall has a plank and batten door, with chamfered, dressed stone quoins and a stone lintel, which are visible from the south-east side (Plate 19; Figure 6). There are two steps down to the south-east. The elevation then continues as part of 'the barn' (Plate 20). The barn has a modern projecting canopy, supported on two posts on the south-east side, above a pedestrian doorway, which has a modern three-light door. There is a larger opening to the south-east, which would originally have been a wagon door but which now houses a full height five-light window. The end of the 'barn' has been extended to the south-east as a rough wall, topped with limestone coping, with a pedestrian doorway with a stone sill and lintel and a modern timber door.



**Plate 19 (left):** Doorway in the boundary wall, viewed from the south-east

**Plate 20 (right):** South-east end of the south-west elevation

4.2.3 **North-west elevation:** most of this side of the building is covered by slate, the lower part, however, has a rough plinth along its base and is finished with a patchy lime render (Plate 21). The boundary wall butts against the south-west end of the main Meeting House but there is a gap to the boundary wall to the north-east side and a large boulder is exposed at the base of the north-east end of the main Meeting House (Plate 22). There is a doorway with a stone lintel in the boundary wall to the south-west side of the main Meeting House, which is probably a later insertion as there is some evident rebuilding.



**Plate 21 (left):** The north-west external elevation

**Plate 22 (right):** The north-east end of the north-west external elevation

4.2.4 **North-east elevation:** the south-east end of the north-east elevation is formed by the side of a small outshut, with a V-shaped valley roof, finished with lead, and a single small one-light hinged casement window (Plate 23). The outshut butts the end of the barn to the north-west. To the north-west of this junction, the barn has a doorway with a rounded head and a three-light modern door. A modern addition causes the elevation to return to the north-east at this point. This addition forms the toilet block and has four six-light hinged / top hung casement windows and one paired six-light hinged casement. At the north-west end of the toilet block the elevation returns to the side of the main Meeting House, which

has a single three-light mullion window with a slate sill (Plate 24). The main Meeting House has a plinth at its base and projecting eaves with iron brackets and supports. The slate hanging from the north-west end extends onto the north-west elevation.



**Plate 23: The north-east external elevation**



**Plate 24: Detail of the mullion window on the north-east external elevation of the main Meeting House**

4.2.5 **South-east elevation:** the south-west end of the south-east elevation is formed by an irregularly shaped outshut, with a tall wall which is topped with limestone coping and rendered (Plate 25). A single-light casement window, with a stone drip course above it and a slate sill, is visible in the main gable of the 'barn' above the outshut. The gable of the toilet block projects to the north-east and is plain apart from a single six-light window with a thin timber sill. The gable of the main Meeting House, which is dominated by the tiered stack of the chimney, is visible to the rear. There is a small window either side of the chimney stack at attic level; the window to the north-east is slatted but the one to the south-west is blocked from the outside. There is a lower level 12-light sash window to the north-east side of the chimney stack above the stairs.



**Plate 25: The south-east external elevation**

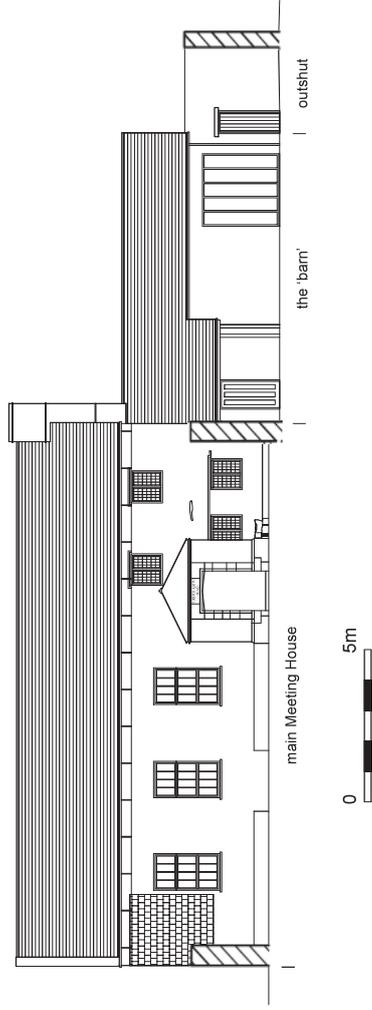
4.2.6 **Grounds:** the south-west side of the Meeting House is enclosed by a tall boundary wall. The wall is in line with the north-west elevation of the main Meeting House and continues along the south-west elevation up to a dividing wall along the end of the main Meeting House before continuing at a lower level to the south-east in front of the 'barn'. The gated main entrance, opposing the porch, has dressed sandstone quoins, with a stop chamfer and moulded top (similar to the porch; Plate 26). The plank-built gate is rusticated but probably 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century, with an elaborate handle and plate and four reused turned balustrades of maybe 17<sup>th</sup> century date (Plate 26 and Plate 27). To the south-east, opposite the outshut to the south-east side of the 'barn', is a gateway. This has a relatively early dressed limestone gatepost on the south-east side and a later slate one to north-west. The wall is roughcast on both faces and finished with limestone coping. There is a slate topped stone mounting block with two steps up either side roughly 8.5m in front of the 'barn' (Plate 28; Figure 3).



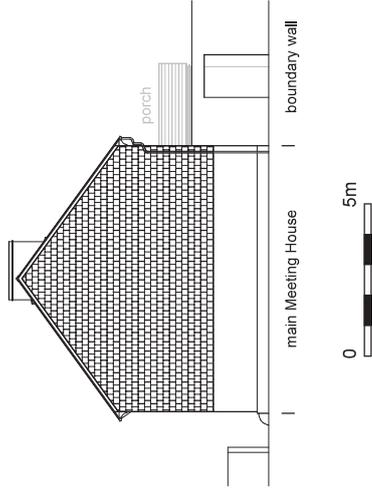


**Plate 28: Mounting block**

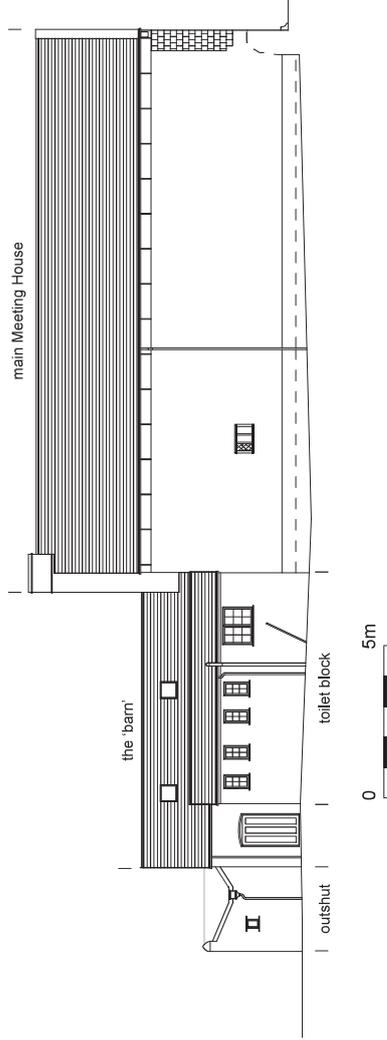
South-west elevation



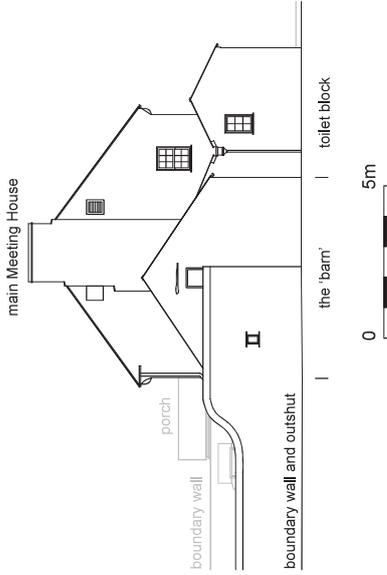
North-west elevation



North-east elevation

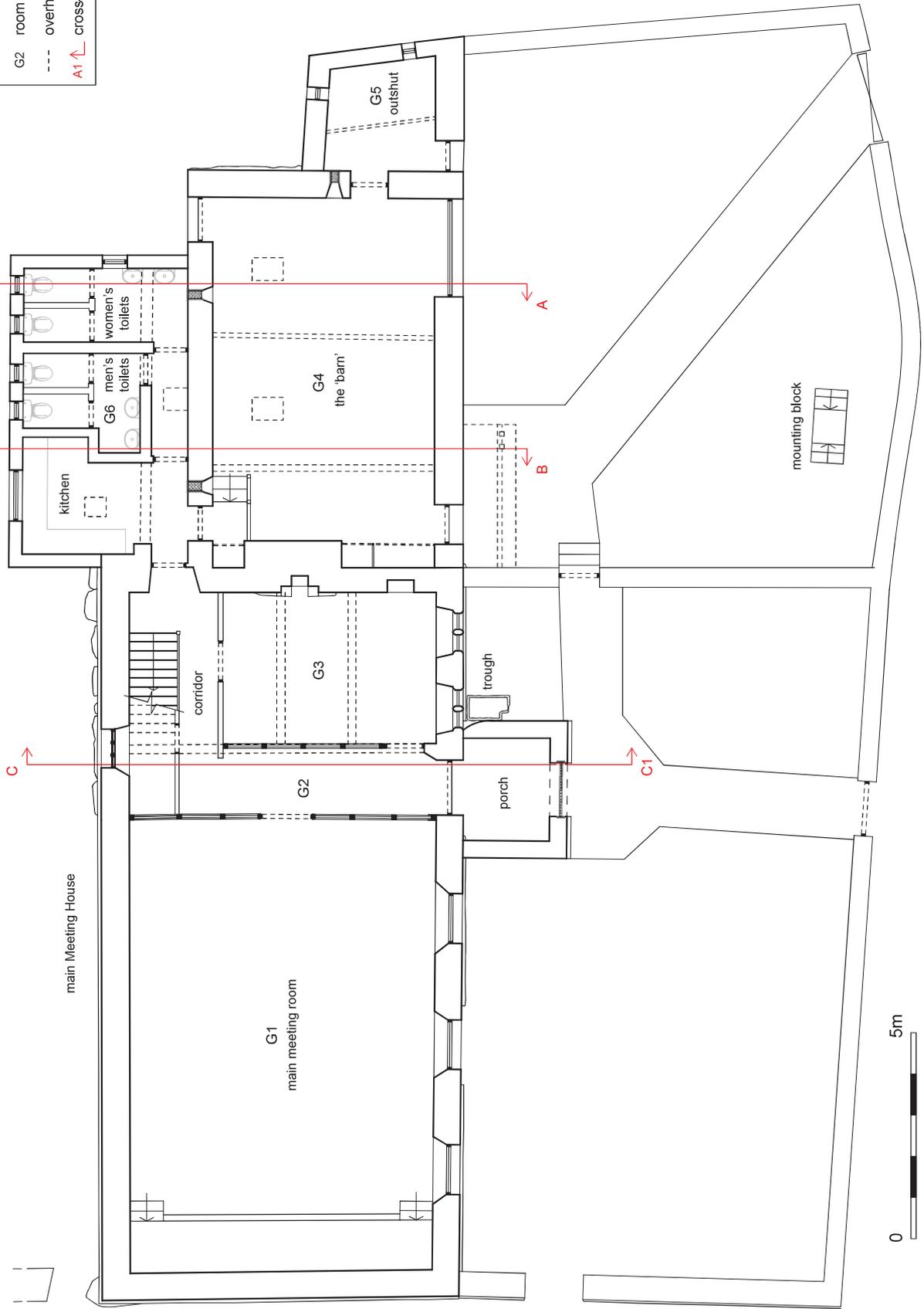


South-east elevation



Key:  cross-sectional timber  cross-sectional wall  blocked feature  features to the rear

Ground floor plan



Key:

	blocked feature
	cross-sectional timber
	room number
	overhead features
	cross-section

Figure 3: Ground floor plan

First floor plan



Key:

	blocked feature
	cross-sectional timber
	room number
	overhead features
	cross-section

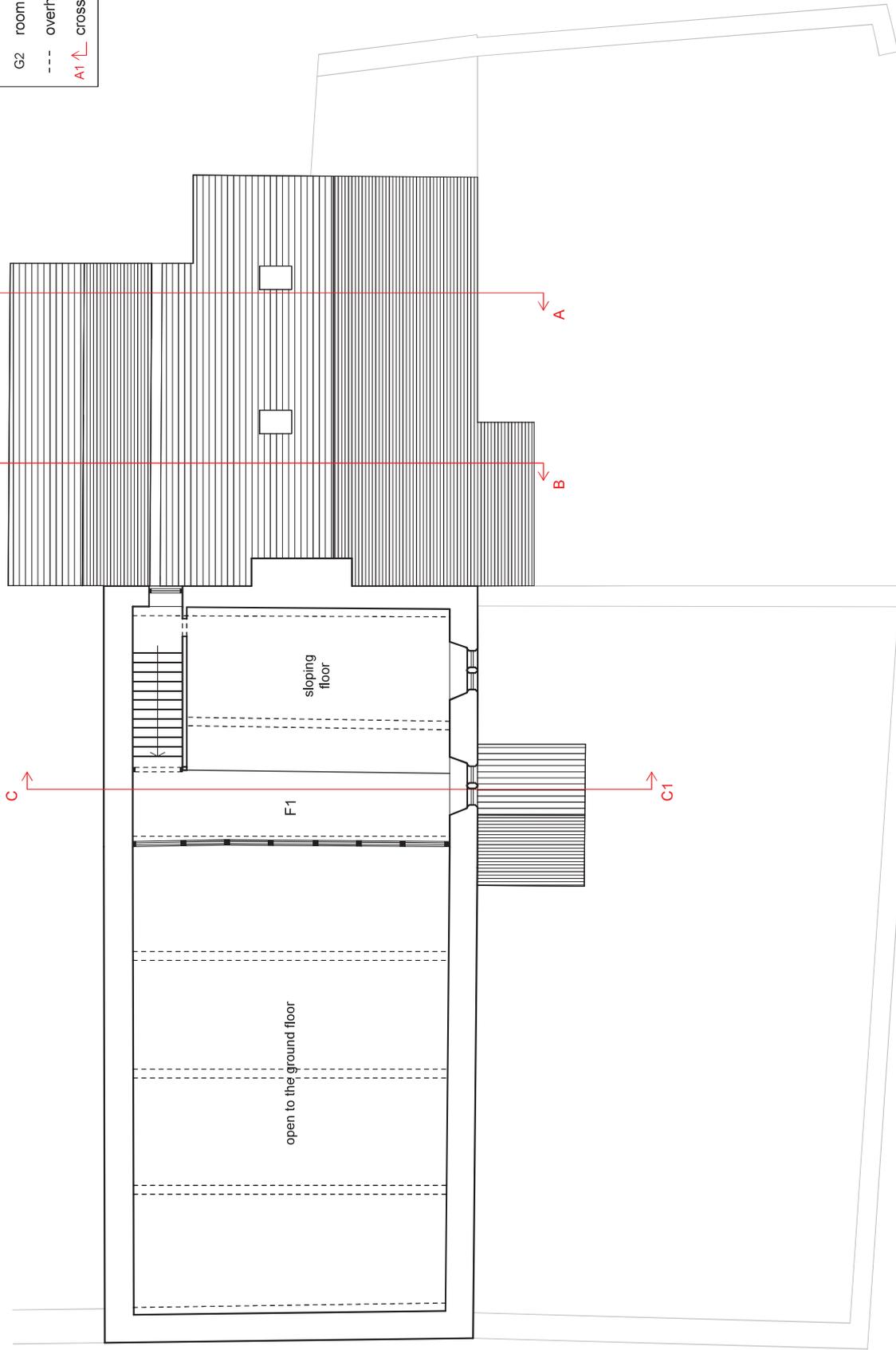


Figure 4: First floor plan

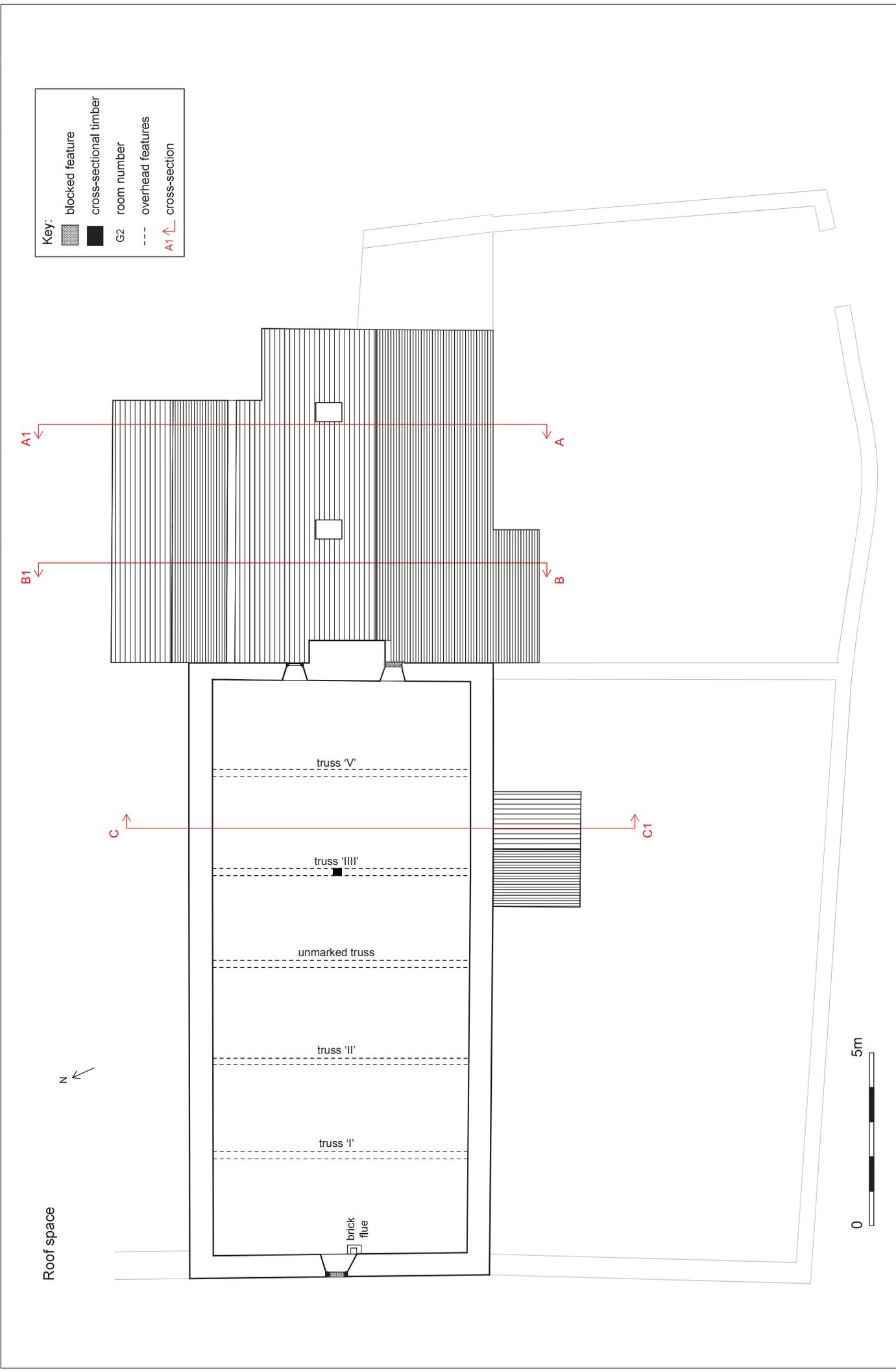
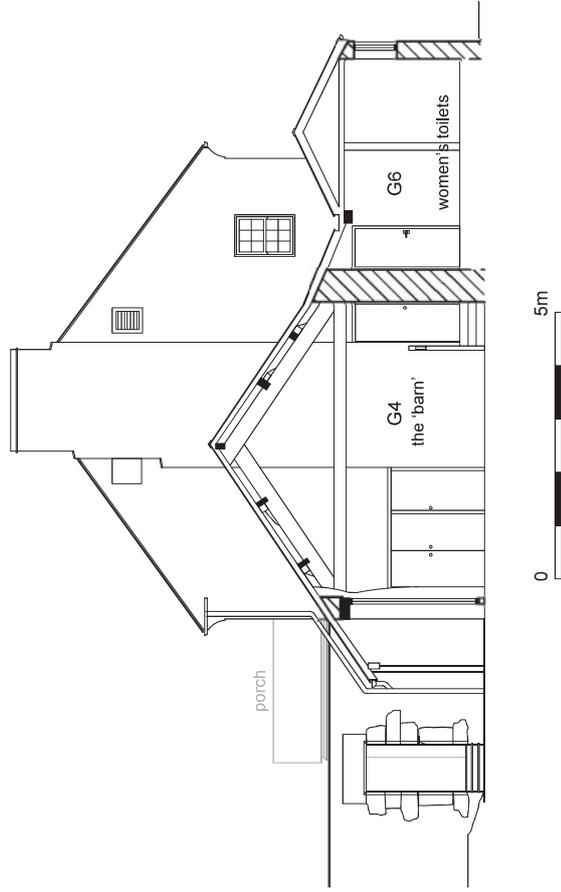
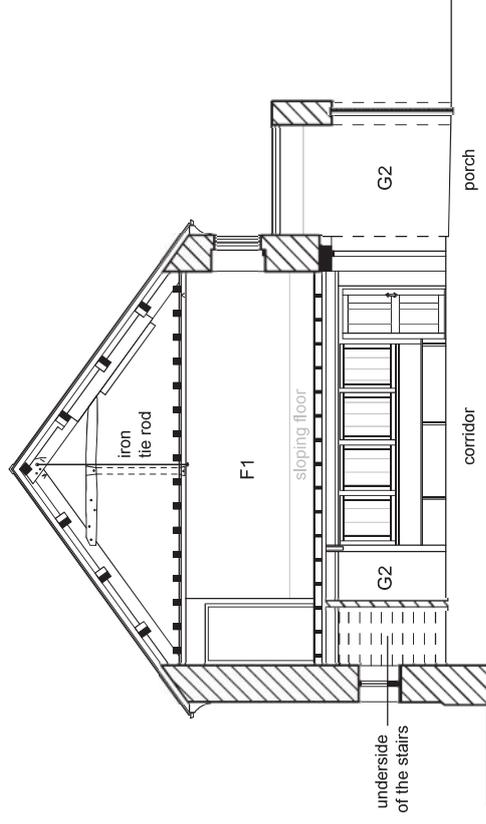


Figure 5: Plan of the roof space

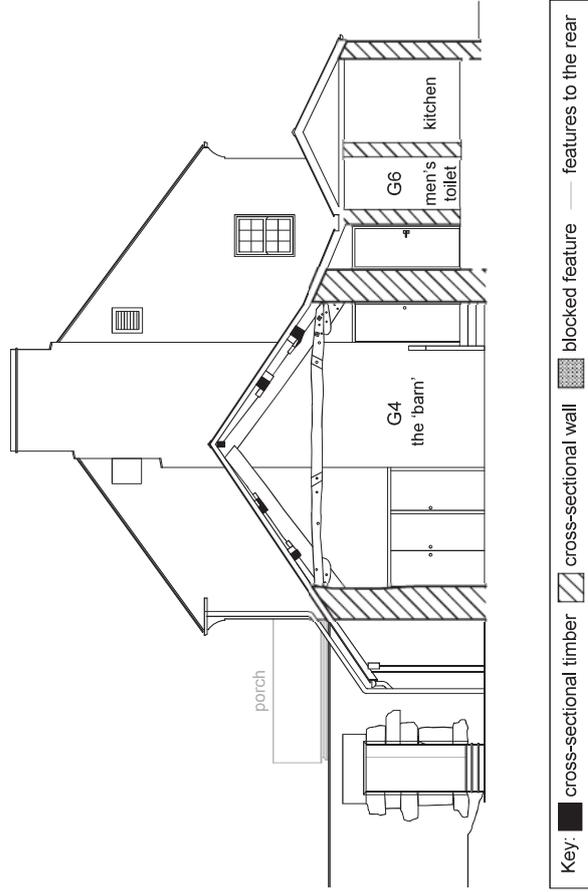
Cross-section A-A1, looking north-west



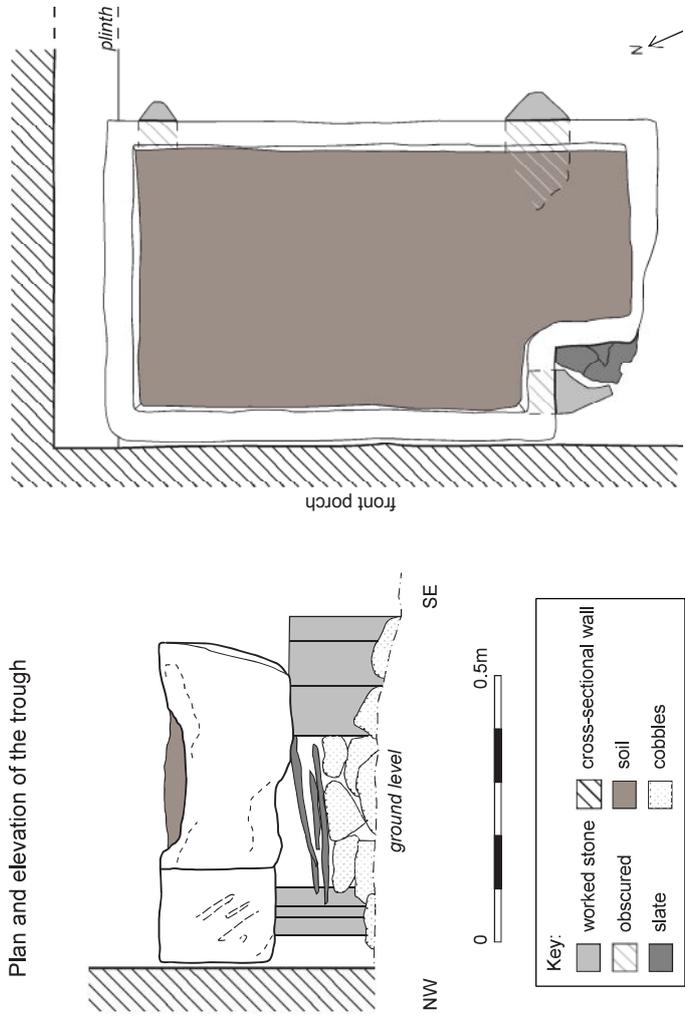
Cross-section C-C1, looking south-east



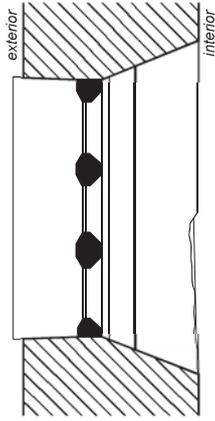
Cross-section B-B1, looking north-west



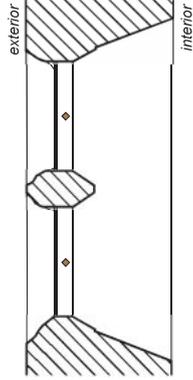
Plan and elevation of the trough



Plan of the timber mullion window located beneath the stairs in G2



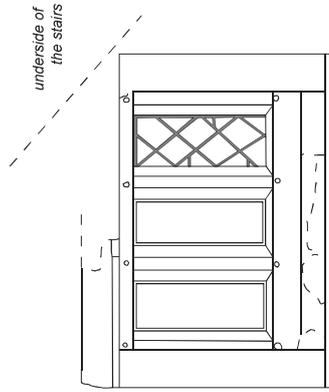
Plan of the south-east mullion window on the south-west elevation of G3



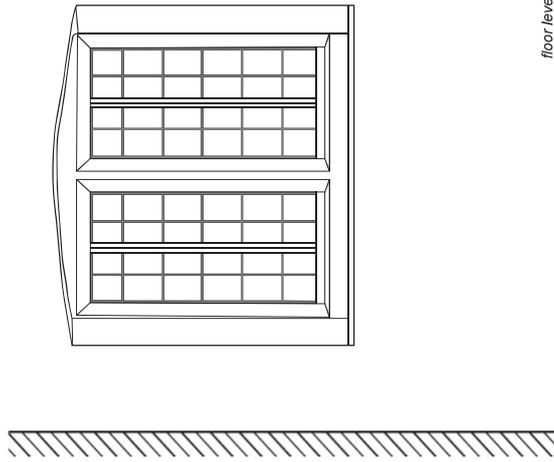
Cross-sectional detail of the worked stone in the south-west side of the fireplace in G3



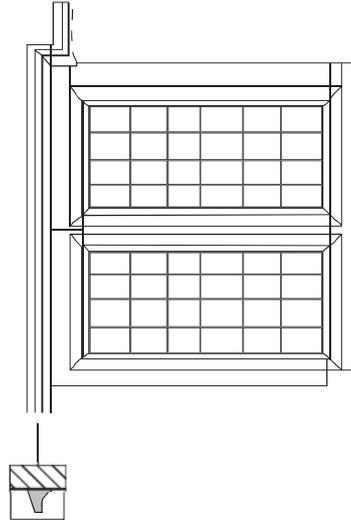
Interior view of the timber mullion window located beneath the stairs in G2



Interior view of the south-east mullion window on the south-west elevation of G3



Exterior view of the south-east mullion window on the south-west elevation of G3



Key: cross-sectional timber cross-sectional wall cross-sectional worked stone iron lead



Figure 7: Detail of the mullion windows and worked stone

## 4.3 Internal Detail

4.3.1 **Ground Floor Room 1:** this is the main meeting room. The plaster ceiling is supported by four north-east/south-west aligned beams (Plate 29). The one against the north-west wall is supported by four corbels, whereas the others have integrated corbels at the north-east ends (Plate 30). All of the timber beams are hand-finished. The walls are all finished with plaster and paint, with panelling over at least the lower part, and the floorboards are carpeted over.



Plate 29 (left): View of the ceiling in Ground Floor Room 1



Plate 30 (right): The north-east end of the trusses in Ground Floor Room 1

4.3.2 The north-west elevation has a raised section housing seating built against it (Plate 31), which has a gallery screen along the south-east side constructed from timber panelling, comprises beaded planks laid horizontally, supported by five square-section posts and there is boxed seating on the south-east side. The north-west elevation proper is covered by thinner and very plain planks with battens and rails (decorated with ovolo moulding), and there is a boxed seat or bench in the same style, with beaded skirting against it. Above this the wall is plain apart from the attached clock. The north-east elevation is mostly plain. There is panelling over the lower part, which is the same as that on the north-west elevation, with a curving top rail rising to meet the north-west rail (Plate 32).



Plate 31 (left): The north-west elevation of Ground Floor Room 1



Plate 32 (right): The north-east elevation of Ground Floor Room 1

4.3.3 The south-east elevation is entirely panel construction (Plate 33 and Plate 34), made from wider but more irregular boards with beaded decoration. The lower level comprises tilting hatches, six in total, in moulded surrounds, with plank construction and a beaded rail below. There is a double door in the centre, with two sets of three panelled doors with ovolo-moulding, which is later than the surrounding hatches. There is a wide board above the door and hatches which appears to have been tacked on later and rather crudely cut around the door. The upper level has seven hinged hatches constructed from wide planks with moulded side rails and a thin central rail. Again, there is slightly rough planking above this, which partially crosses the surround and an even rougher plank above this. Below these hinged plank hatches there is a row of sliding shutters on pullies (with a similar mechanism to sash windows) below that can be raised to provide a double cover over the top hatches. It is possible that these were originally hinged hatches in a similar style to the ones below that have been reconfigured.



**Plate 33 (left): The south-east elevation of Ground Floor Room 1**

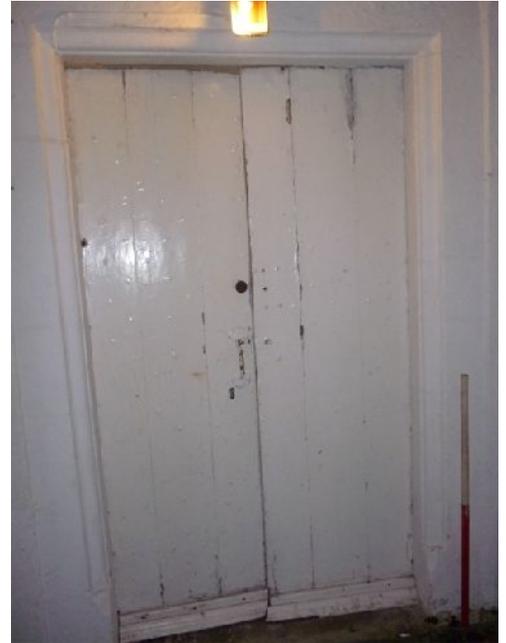
**Plate 34 (right): Detail of the panelling on the south-east elevation of Ground Floor Room 1**

4.3.4 The south-west elevation has panelling covering the lower part and wide planks in ovolo-moulded rails. There is a row of three (possibly 20<sup>th</sup> century) very tall, hinged, 12-light windows, with timber sills which meet the top of the moulding (Plate 35). The windows have splayed jambs.



**Plate 35: The south-west elevation of Ground Floor Room 1**

4.3.5 **Ground Floor Room 2:** the description for Ground Floor Room 2 covers the corridor (including the porch and the area beneath the stairs) and the stairs. The porch has a flag floor and a gabled roof, with neatly sawn purlins and rafters with one purlin per pitch. The walls are plastered and whitewashed. The north-west elevation is plain apart from a row of old timber coat hooks on a moulded timber batten (Plate 36). The north-east elevation has a doorway with a moulded stone surround with a stop chamfer and a heavy plank door with an early latch plate and iron studs (see Plate 37). The south-east elevation is plain. The south-west elevation has a doorway with dressed stone jambs and an arched top (Plate 38).



**Plate 36 (left):** The north-west elevation of the porch

**Plate 37 (right):** The north-east elevation of the porch



**Plate 38:** The south-west elevation of the porch

4.3.6 The corridor forms an L-shape around the north-west and north-east sides of Ground Floor Room 3 (see Figure 3). The north-east/south-west aligned section has a flag floor and a plaster ceiling with hand-finished north-east/south-west aligned beams along either side (Plate 39; Figure 6). The beam to the north-west has a row of nine scratches on it (possibly tally marks) and is covered in paint and although the one to the south-east may have a slight chamfer it is also plastered (visible to the top right

of Plate 41). The north-west elevation has a row of plank built hatches on early hinges between square posts (Plate 40). The south-west end has been slightly truncated to accommodate an additional post supporting the rotten end of the beam (see Plate 44). The central double door has three panels in each and beading round the square surround. The door is apparently in the position of another hatch, each hatch being approximately 37 inches wide, with the hatches either side having been shortened to accommodate the insertion of the door. The hatch posts sit on a low masonry (possibly brick) wall, which has also been cut through to accommodate the door. The hatches continue beyond the partition wall at the north-east end of the room, which has a beaded plank construction (Plate 41) with a door in a similar style to the ones along the rest of the corridor. The upper part of the partition looks later.



Plate 39 (left): The north-west elevation of the corridor

Plate 40 (right): Detail of the panelling along the north-west side of the corridor



Plate 41: The partition wall along the underside of the stairs

4.3.7 The north-east elevation of the corridor forms the external wall of the building, which is accessible below the stairs. The north-east elevation below the stairs is plain and plastered and has a three-light timber mullion window, with splayed jambs, on the north-east side. The south-east section is leaded and the timber used is octagonal in section and pegged (Figure 7). The south-east side of the room forms the underside of the stairs, which are very modern timber. The south-west side of this space comprises the rear side of the panelled wall, which comprises a mixture of timbers along the top part but in general is earlier than the stairs, although they are fixed together.



**Plate 42: Timber mullion window beneath the stairs**

4.3.8 The south-east elevation of the north-east/south-west section is open at the north-east end (along the side of the stairs). The rest comprises a row of four hinged shutters, with moulded panels and beaded surrounds, with a bench below (Figure 6). There is a plank and batten construction door made from wide planks, with beaded edges, and an early latch plate at the south-west end, which is contemporary with the other hatches (Plate 43).



**Plate 43: Door in the south-east elevation of the corridor**

4.3.9 The south-west end of this section of the corridor houses the double door to the porch (Plate 44). The large double door is made from doubled planks, set vertically on the north-east side and horizontally on the south-west, and hung on large strap hinges. It has an ornate ironwork lock (Plate 45). The beam above is in poor condition and has a large slot in the north-west end, which indicates it has been re-used, perhaps from a piece of timber framing.



**Plate 44 (left): The doorway to the porch viewed from the corridor**

**Plate 45 (centre): The latch on the porch door (viewed from the corridor)**

4.3.10 The north-west/south-east section of the corridor also has a flag floor and a plaster ceiling on the south-west side. The stairs are to the north-east. The stairs are very plain with modern square spindles and a turned newel with a square top and bottom (Plate 46). The north-east elevation (which is the external wall) is plain. There is a modern door in the south-east elevation with a modern 12-light sliding sash window above it at approximately first floor level (Plate 47; see Figure 4). The south-west elevation of this section of the corridor is masonry and plain apart from the door to Ground Floor Room 3. The door has a plain surround but has a beaded plank door and an early latch.



**Plate 46 (left): The stairs, viewed from Ground Floor Room 2**

**Plate 47 (right): Window above the stairs in the south-east elevation of the main Meeting House**

4.3.11 **Ground Floor Room 3:** this room has a flag floor and a plaster ceiling, which slopes slightly to the north-west. There are two beams across the ceiling, which have been skimmed with plaster and have hooks for the shutters at the north-west end (Plate 48). The walls are all plastered and painted. The lower part of the north-west elevation is solid masonry which supports the framing for the plank construction hinged shutters on eight early hinges (Plate 49). There is a plank and batten door with long strap hinges hung on pintels at the south-west end (Plate 50). The north-east elevation is plain apart from the plank and batten door to the south-east of centre (Plate 51). The door has a beaded surround and hinges similar to those on the hatches to the north-west. The south-west elevation has central fireplace (Plate 52) and there is an alcove to the south-west which is used for shelving (Plate 53). The fireplace is an odd construction with an arched top and hob grate backed with brick (some of which is modern) and loosely blocked up with more brick internally. It has slightly projecting outer cheeks and there is a piece of moulded stone on the south-west edge. The stone is probably a moulded piece of door jamb and is stylistically the same as those used in the porch. The south-west elevation has two two-light stone mullion windows with slightly arched tops and iron dividing bars in each light and timber sills (Plate 54).



**Plate 48 (left): The beams in Ground Floor Room 3**



**Plate 49 (right): The north-west elevation of Ground Floor Room 3**



**Plate 50 (left): Door at the south-west end of the north-west elevation of Ground Floor Room 3**

**Plate 51 (right): Door in the north-east elevation of Ground Floor Room 3**



**Plate 52 (left): Fireplace in Ground Floor Room 3**

**Plate 53 (right): Alcove to the south-east of the fireplace in Ground Floor Room 3**



**Plate 54: Mullion windows in the south-west elevation of Ground Floor Room 3**

4.3.12 **Ground Floor Room 4:** this room was originally a barn or possibly a stable. There is a vinyl floor in this room and it is open to the roof structure although the rafters are concealed by plaster (Plate 55 and Plate 57). There are two trusses exposed with three purlins per pitch. Most of the timber is hand-finished and there is some evidence for re-use of the timbers, although the south-west rafters and truss are later sawn (perhaps Baltic) timbers. The principals meet at a very basic joint and a group of letters apparently reading "O/C<sup>S</sup>M.I" are painted onto the north-west face at the south-west end of north-west truss. The north-west truss has a very simple lap joint at the principals and the tie beam is slightly raised and sat on additional blocks, which are nailed on. The joints are pegged, but some have additional iron bolts present. The walls are finished with modern plaster and painted. The north-west elevation has a central projecting section (which is the back of the chimneybreast) with modern cupboards in the alcoves to either side (Plate 55). There is a piece of timber built into the chimneybreast on the north-east side, but it is hidden by notice boards to the south-west. There are steps up to the toilet block to the north-east side. There is a doorway at the top of the steps on the north-east elevation, housing a modern plank door. To the south-east of this there are two low-level alcoves with timber lintels, originally vent slots, with some timber built in above, and there is a doorway at the south-east end. The timber lintel above the doorway suggests it was originally much wider, although it now houses a smaller modern door (Plate 56). The south-east elevation has a new opening single-light window on the upper level, with a rough

(possibly re-used) timber lintel and a timber sill and some pieces in the jambs (Plate 57 and Plate 58). There is an alcove on the ground floor level, which was perhaps originally a vent, which is lined with upright slates, and there is a small alcove with a timber lintel above that. To the south-west of this there is a modern plank and batten door, which is probably a later insertion. The south-west elevation has some exposed timber built into it and there is a wide opening with a rough timber lintel on the south-east side. There is a pedestrian doorway on the north-west side, with a modern door and a rough timber lintel.



Plate 55 (left): North-west elevation of Ground Floor Room 4



Plate 56 (right): South-east end of the north-east elevation



Plate 57 (left): South-east truss in Ground Floor Room 4



Plate 58 (right): The south-east elevation of Ground Floor Room 4

4.3.13 **Ground Floor Room 5:** this room is a small extension to the south-east side of the 'barn' (Figure 3). The outshut has vinyl flooring, which continues from Ground Floor Room 4. It has a dropping V-

shaped ceiling on a central north-east/south-west beam and the beam and rafters are all machine cut. The walls are all plastered and painted. There is a central doorway housing a modern plank and batten door on the north-west elevation. The north-east elevation has a small window on the south-east side, with a tilting single-light casement and there are what look to be two projecting bricks to the north-west of this. There is another small single-light fixed casement window on the south-east elevation (Plate 59) and there is a doorway with a sandstone lintel and a plank and batten door on the north-west side of the south-west elevation.



**Plate 59: South-east elevation of Ground Floor Room 5**

4.3.14 **Ground Floor Room 6:** the description for this room covers the kitchen area and the toilet block. The block is split into three sections: the kitchen is at the north-west end and the women's toilets is at the south-east end, which is accessed via a small corridor which passes along the south-west side of the men's toilets, which forms the central section (Figure 3). There is vinyl floor throughout and the plaster ceiling slopes down from the barn roof to the south-west and is then flat. There is a central skylight above the kitchen area and another skylight which is fairly central above the corridor on the south-west side. The women's and men's toilets are further subdivided into cubicles (Figure 3), which have a modern finish, including some tiling and plain skirting, and sinks and toilets are attached throughout. There is a row of four identical windows along the north-east elevation (one per cubicle) and another larger window in the kitchen area. There is another window in the south-east elevation. The kitchen has units against the north-west and south-west sides and is similarly modern and there are doors to the south-west and north-west.

4.3.15 **First Floor Room 1:** the first floor level is only present at the south-east end of the meeting house and is open to the north-west side of the partition above Ground Floor Room 1 (Figure 4). There are narrow tongue and groove boards on a north-east/south-west alignment at the north-west end of the room and the floor slopes upwards to the south-east (Plate 60). The boards on the sloping section are aligned north-west/south-east and are much wider and have benches nailed to them in tiers. The ceiling is plastered and flat and has a single central north-east/south-west beam (Plate 61). The beam is hand-finished and marked with an upside-down 'V' carpenter's mark at the south-west end on the north-west face. There is an iron bolt through the underside (the end of a tie rod running connected to the top of the truss above; see *Section 4.3.16* below) and the north-east end continues through the timber partition wall above the stairs and sits on a corbel. There are further beams in the same style against the north-west and south-east elevations, both of which are plastered. The one to the north-west has a bolt projecting through the underside but the one to the south-east, which sits on a row of three corbels, does not. The walls in this room vary. The upper part of the north-west elevation comprises shuttered panels, with wide

beaded planks laid horizontally, forming seven hinged shutters with corresponding sliding shutters on the north-west side (Plate 62). There are thin beaded studs between the shutters but these are effectively just cut into the plank wall (Plate 63). The north-east elevation is a solid wall on the north-west side, which continues down the stairs. There is a plank and batten door at the top of the stairs (Plate 64), where the wall returns to the south-west, before it continues as a timber stud wall built of beaded planks along the side of the stairway (Plate 65). The battens are beaded and the door has an early latch plate but it has been made wider with the addition of plank to the north-east side and it has modern hinges. There are scars for earlier hinges on the wrong side of the door on the south-east face. The rest of the plank wall is of a similar build, made from wide planks, with a small hatch cut into the plank at the south-east end. The hatch has an early handle and hinges. The south-east elevation is plain. The south-west elevation has two mullion windows, which are octagonal in section and plain, with two leaded lights (Plate 66), similar to those on the ground floor. They are slightly arched to the south-east and have timber sills. The one to the north-west has four iron bars across it. The lintel over the porch door is visible through a hole in the floor and has a slot in the top and a stepped/rebated edge (Plate 67).



**Plate 60 (left): Tiered seating in First Floor Room 1**

**Plate 61 (right): Central beam in First Floor Room 1**



**Plate 62 (left): North-west elevation of First Floor Room 1**

**Plate 63 (right): Detail of the shutters in First Floor Room 1**



Plate 64 (left): Detail of the door to First Floor room 1



Plate 65 (right): Stud wall along the side of the stairs, viewed from First Floor Room 1



Plate 66 (left): South-west elevation of First Floor Room 1



Plate 67 (right): Lintel above the porch, viewed from First Floor Room 1

4.3.16 **Roof Space:** the space above the first floor level of the main Meeting House is open to the roof structure. The joists might be early but they are largely obscured by fibreglass. There are five trusses, dividing the room into six bays (Figure 5), but only one is complete (truss 'IIII'; see Plate 73). They were evidently all tie beam trusses, the beam projecting down to the rooms below, with a collar, and the king post between the tie beam and collar is jointed onto the north-west face of the collar. All but one is now missing the king post and the collar is missing from the second truss from the north-west end (truss 'III'). All of them now have an iron tie rod between the tie beam and principals (see Figure 6). Carpenter's marks are present at the junction between the principals, but there were evidently also marks originally on the junction with the tie beam. From the north-west end the chiselled marks on the trusses read 'I' (Plate 68 and Plate 69) then 'II' (Plate 70 and Plate 71), there is nothing on the central one, then 'IIII' (Plate 73 to Plate 75) and 'V' (Plate 76 and Plate 77; see Figure 5). There are also carpenter's marks at the junction between the collar and king post. The north-west truss has no scar for a king post and so no carpenter's mark, the one to the south-east is missing the collar, the marks then run 'II', 'III', but there is

none on the south-east truss. There are some levelling marks visible on truss 'V' and truss 'II'. The king post truss for truss 'V' has clearly been re-used as there are lots of peg holes and a circular burn mark near the top on the north-east face (Plate 75). There are three purlins per pitch (see Figure 6), which are mostly hand-finished, although some are machine cut replacements, and there is an iron brace between truss 'I' and 'II' on the south-west side (Plate 72). The ridge purlin and rafters are machine cut.



**Plate 68 (left): Truss 'I'**

**Plate 69 (right): Detail of truss 'I'**



**Plate 70 (left): Truss 'II'**

**Plate 71 (centre): Detail of truss 'II'**

**Plate 72 (right): Iron brace between truss 'I' and 'II'**



**Plate 73 (left): Truss 'IIII'**

**Plate 74 (centre): Detail of truss 'IIII'**

**Plate 75 (right): Detail of king post and circular burn mark, truss 'IIII'**



**Plate 76 (left): Truss 'V'**

**Plate 77 (right): Detail of truss 'V'**

4.3.17 The gable end walls are exposed, but the other elevations are not visible. There is a central window on the north-west elevation with a massive timber lintel, which may have been re-used (Plate 78). The jambs are splayed, dressed stone mullion jambs, but they are covered by mortar and the window is blocked with a large piece of slate and there is a brick-built flue against the south-west side. None of the bricks are frogged, perhaps suggesting a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century date, and similar brick has been added along the top of the ridge. Either side of the centre on the south-east elevation there is a window with timber mullion surrounds and a rough timber lintel (Plate 79). The north-east window has timber slats across it (Plate 80) but the south-west one is blocked with a piece of slate. There is a stone projecting in the centre with "H STABLES 10/92" scored into cement below it (Plate 81) and there is a

paired set of toilet seats attached to a wood panel and separate plank-built hatch door loose on the floor (Plate 82).



**Plate 78 (left): Window in the north-west elevation of the roof space**

**Plate 79 (centre): South-east elevation of the roof space**

**Plate 80 (right): Detail of the slatted window in the south-east elevation of the roof space**



**Plate 81 (left): Projecting stone and concrete on the south-east elevation of the roof space**

**Plate 82 (right): Loose toilet seats and hatch door in the roof space**

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Phasing

5.1.1 **Introduction:** the building clearly retains some very early fabric but has also undergone a number of alterations and modifications. In total, four phases of development were identified.

5.1.2 **Phase 1 (16<sup>th</sup> century):** the origins of the building clearly lie in whatever was standing on Petty's Croft when it was acquired by George Fox in 1687, a property that is recorded as existing perhaps as early as 1538. Fox's acquisition evidently included a house, barn, kiln, and other elements, some, all, or none of which might have been constructed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century or earlier. His specifications suggest that he intended the barn to be used as a meeting house, and that it should be enlarged to make it double the width, but there is no evidence within the building to suggest that this actually happened. The earliest part of the site, comprising the main meeting house with attached domestic section at the south-east end, was clearly all one phase of construction; the row of boulders comprising the footings visible on the north-east elevation and the plinth along the south-west indicate that this was constructed in a single event. It is also notable that the plinth is broken in the centre, suggesting that the central window was originally the site of a doorway; a particularly wide doorway that would be suitable for a barn. This would seem to suggest that the barn purchased as part of Petty's Croft was retained for use as a meeting house. How large these original elements were and whether it had an upper floor is difficult to ascertain, although it is suggested that it was raised in height during Phase 2 (see *Section 5.1.3* below). Regardless of this it may originally have had an upper, attic, floor at the south-east end but the position of the stairs accessing this is unknown. It is possible that they comprised a spiral or intra-mural staircase built into the wall; there is what appears to be a slight projection in the wall in the east corner, now forming a doorway to Room G6. Dating of these elements is also difficult. The stone mullion windows in the south-west elevation and timber mullion window in the north-east are unlikely to be later than the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Alcock and Hall 2002, 38-39) although they could be late medieval (Brunskill 2000, 170-171). The description of windows with surrounds of 'Gothic' style, although seemingly suggested by Gaythorpe to be effectively Gothic-revival, might also be an indication of an early, essentially medieval date. In addition, the replacement of these windows with the larger ones that remain today, to provide more light, also suggests that the originals were smaller and therefore arguably more likely to be earlier. It is difficult to find similar examples to compare the earliest parts of the building with. It is conceivable that the two beams utilised to support the panelling in the corridor from the main entrance represent the original position of a cross passage, perhaps flanked by timber walls or screens, although there is no evidence for a corresponding doorway at the other end. However, the presence of a cross-passage would only suggest a date prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Brunskill 2000, 69-72). The large projecting chimney at the south-east end of this section might also indicate a relatively early date (see Perriam and Robinson 1998). What is clear is that many of these features would have been quite archaic in the 1680s.

5.1.3 **Phase 2 (late 17<sup>th</sup> century):** the exact extent to which the existing buildings at Petty's Croft were modified to provide a new meeting house, as per the gift of George Fox, is uncertain. It has been noted that despite there being '*neither instructions nor central directives on how local Friends were to accommodate their meeting*' the buildings that came to be used or were built were remarkably uniform in style across the country (Butler 1999, 888). Swarthmoor best fits with Butler's type 'D' (*op cit*, 890), but it would appear from the evidence on site that this owes a considerable amount to the origins of the building in Phase 1. Much of the available evidence regarding the meeting house at Swarthmoor is contradictory; some sources suggest the previous buildings were totally rebuilt while others that they were largely retained and re-used, and there is no guarantee that Fox's original specification was adhered to. What also confuses the issue is the complete rendering of the exterior elevations, which has hidden any earlier apertures and the relationships between the different elements of the building. There is no direct evidence that his suggestion that it be doubled in width was actually carried out and it seems more likely that the original building was only modified rather than extensively rebuilt. It is evident that at its acquisition the building already comprised a dwelling house, barn and kiln. The former two elements can be seen in the existing building; the barn later converted to form the meeting house (Room G1), as per George Fox's specification, and the dwelling house immediately to the south-east (Room G3)

retained, perhaps to provide a women's meeting room (Butler 1978, 125) divided by a passageway (Room G2). The kiln has evidently since been removed, although the specification suggests that it was to be retained and the rents used to support the new meeting house; it may have been positioned to the north-east of the dwelling. The part of the building now known as 'the barn' was undoubtedly originally a stable and cart house. It is clearly a later addition to the main block to the north-west, but the documentary sources indicate that it had been constructed before Fox's acquisition of the site; stylistically the trusses suggest an 18<sup>th</sup> century date (Brunskill 2002, 153), but it could be earlier or the roof replaced. The presence of some re-used timber within the trusses might indicate that the latter is the case. It is also notable that the ground level between the entrance to the main meeting house and the 'barn' to the south-east is different, being lower to the south-east. This too may represent an alteration belonging to this phase since George Fox's specifications suggests the raising of the ground and paving of the entrance to the meeting house (see *Section 3.2.4*).

5.1.4 Although there is no evidence that the creation of the meeting house involved an enlargement of the footprint of the building, despite George Fox's suggestion that it should, it does seem likely that the height was raised. There is little physical evidence to indicate that this actually happened, although the replacement of the presumably smaller medieval windows in the south-west elevation might have essentially been facilitated by the increased wall height. The presence of windows in the roof space, two out of three of which are now blocked, and the different style of the mullion windows in the south-west elevation of the first floor, compared to those below, is suggestive of this having happened. These would have been to illuminate a garrett-style accommodation above the main part of the building, and would have been unnecessary in the original barn, although the original dwelling end (Room G3) could have still had an attic floor above with or without windows. This addition would have provided more space, as per George Fox's instructions, but was perhaps considered relatively simple compared to doubling the width of the building. Raising the height of the building would also have provided the space for the upper floor room at the south-east end of the building (Room F1), what was thought to have been used as a school room or perhaps even a women's meeting room from as early as the 1690s. The sloping floor neither contradicts nor confirms this, but given that the extant shuttered partition wall to the north-west seems to have been added later (see *Section 5.1.5* below) there must have been an earlier one at first floor level at least that was replaced. The roof trusses too would also therefore all belong to this phase; although they were subsequently modified (see *Section 5.1.6* below); their relatively unusual style, including the integral corbels on the north-east ends, might be a factor of the length of span they are covering. In addition, the burn mark surviving on the extant king post is of interest as it has been suggested that these might have been to mark out elements for assembly (Dean and Hill 2011a; 2011b), although it is as yet unproven. The position of the original staircase to the upper floor following the work carried out in this phase is unclear, but it is likely to have been in a similar position to where it is now, but perhaps against the south-east wall as the present position blocks one of the shutters in the dividing partition wall and the timber mullion window (see *Section 5.1.5* below). The one alteration that does seem to certainly belong to this phase, and which is mentioned in Fox's specifications, is the addition of the porch to the main south-west entrance. The style of moulding is certainly consistent with a late 17<sup>th</sup> century date (Alcock and Hall 2002, 54-55), although it is not especially diagnostic. It is worth noting that the moulded piece re-used in the jamb of fireplace in Room G3 is most similar in style to this doorway, rather than any of the window mullions, as has been previously suggested. The date cut into the lintel of the porch would suggest this is the case, although the style of this inscription (compared with more typical 17<sup>th</sup> century inscriptions, see Garnett 1994 for example), its crisp condition, especially given Fell's account from 1777, which states that the inscription was by that time badly worn and does not mention the date, suggests that this has been re-cut more recently, but presumably no earlier than the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The porch is also of interest as it appears to include a cavetto moulded drip course made from re-used pieces similar to those used above the mullion window on the ground floor, which is also partially covered by the line of the porch and so clearly earlier.

5.1.5 **Phase 3 (18<sup>th</sup> – early 19<sup>th</sup> century):** according to the Listed Building information (see *Appendix 1*) and at least some previous commentators, the interior of the main Meeting House was altered in about 1814 when the partition/screen at the south-east end of the meeting room and the north-west side of Rooms G3 and F1 with its hinged and sliding shutters was added. This suggestion is, however, based

entirely on the presence of a large amount of expenditure in the accounts for the meeting house, although these do not actually specify what the money was spent on. While the form of shutters and panelling would certainly fit with this date, the style of the hinges suggests an earlier date, perhaps 18<sup>th</sup> or late 17<sup>th</sup> century is possible (Alcock and Hall 2002, 24). Certainly the technology used in the upper, sliding shutters, is similar to that used in sliding sash windows and so could date from any point after their general introduction in the 1670s (The Georgian Group 2004). In this case the partitions could of course have been added in Phase 2, which is potentially more likely as otherwise the meeting room and Room G3 would have been open to the main entrance corridor. Regardless of this other modifications were also carried out at this time, including the installation of a stove, evidence for which is found in the iron bracket attached to the purlin and additional iron supporting beam in the roof space (see Plate 72). The large windows in the south-west elevation of the meeting room were also a later addition, recorded as being added in 1829, although the sash windows added at that time have obviously been replaced since. In addition, the under stair cupboard at the north-east end of the entrance corridor (Room G2) must also have been added at a later date, as it blocks one of the hatches into the meeting room, and stylistically would seem to belong to this phase. It is also apparent that the small outshut on the south end of 'the barn' (Room G5) was added during this general period, as it is shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1851 (Plate 2). Its function is unclear although it was perhaps used as an outside toilet or hen house, although it has evidently been subsequently modified. In addition, the formerly massive fireplace in Room G3 was probably reduced to its present size during this period, although it is not clear where the piece of re-used moulded door jamb incorporated in the blocking of this came from. Similarly, it is unclear where the loose pieces of mullion on which the trough is sat originated. The covering of the north-west gable with hung slate in 1843 also led to the blocking of the upper level window in this elevation, still visible in the roof space. The windows at the opposing end may have gone out of use at the same time; perhaps the former garret was only being used for storage from this point onwards. The window at the north-west end was subsequently blocked further by the addition of a brick flue against the wall, probably in Phase 4.

**5.1.6 Phase 4 (late 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century):** further minor alterations were carried out to the main Meeting House during this phase. The large windows at the south-west elevation now have late 20<sup>th</sup> century casements with glazing bars, which presumably replaced the original sash windows in 1995. In addition, the eaves have been modified with a skim of painted render added and iron brackets supporting the gutter, which contrast with what is shown in the earliest illustration (Plate 1). The building was perhaps in a somewhat poor state of repair by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, maybe mirroring the state of Swarthmoor Hall at this time, prior to its rescue by Emma Clerk Abraham (Winchester 1996, 25-26; it is particularly noticeable that much of the panelling at the Hall had been deliberately removed by souvenir hunters). It is recorded that some of the panelling was replaced in the meeting room in 1936, although this may have just been filling areas that were at that time blank. This must be represented by the panelling along the north-east wall, which is notably different in style from the rest and evidently much later. At the same time the stairs to the upper floor were renewed, although they most probably replaced an earlier staircase in the same location. Perhaps also during this period the ebony bedposts used in the passageway as door jambs were removed; it is also apparent that the doorway between the passageway (Room G2) and the meeting room (Room G1) was modified. Indeed, it appears, based on the size of the neighbouring hatches, that this doorway was inserted through the position of another hatch. If this was the case, however, this would have meant that there was no access into the meeting house unless an alternative doorway has since been lost. In addition, the south-western most hatch on the north-west side of the passageway was slightly modified, perhaps during this period, with the addition of a replacement jamb on the south-west side, presumably to help support the beam above, which must have been falling out of place for some time. Further modifications were also carried out in the roof space; the king posts of almost all of the trusses were removed and replaced with iron tie rods running between the tie beam and the junction of the principal rafters, perhaps in order to improve access or as part of general roof repairs intended to increase its strength. In addition, a brick flue was built against the north-west wall, partially over the former window at this end, which presumably corresponded to the addition of a new stove recorded in 1935. After 1936 there was seemingly relatively little change to the building until the creation of the new toilet and kitchen block (Room G6) and

conversion of the former stable (Room G4) in the 1980s. However, the main meeting house saw only relatively minor changes in this period, the most noticeable perhaps being the replacement of the three large windows in 1995.

## 5.2 Conclusion

5.2.1 Swarthmoor Meeting House is Listed Grade II\* and so is of national historical importance and statutorily protected. The site is of particular historical interest due to its connection with George Fox and the early history of the Quakers. Although the history of the site has already been researched, this building recording represents the first detailed examination of the structure itself, and it has resulted in some important new insights into its development. Most important is the revelation that the meeting house apparently made extensive use of an existing building, rather than rebuilding it, and that this early building was probably very early in date, perhaps late medieval or early post-medieval; at least 16<sup>th</sup> century. The modification of this building to create the meeting house seems to have involved several elements, including raising the wall height, adding a porch, and possibly adding the partition walls with hinged and sliding shutters, although these have traditionally been considered early 19<sup>th</sup> century in date. Some, but not all, of these changes fit the specification initially given by George Fox. Later modifications were less substantial, but they significantly changed the character of the building. The addition of concrete render is probably also responsible for a number of the more recent problems with damp.

5.2.2 Further investigation of the building's fabric would undoubtedly provide additional understanding of its development, in particular dendrochronological dating of the roof trusses and, if possible the two beams running the length of the entrance corridor (Room G2). In addition, examination of any areas where substantial amounts of external render or internal plaster were to be removed might also provide additional information. Further research of available archive information particularly that held in Friends' House in London, might also be useful.

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## Appendix 1: Listed Building Information

(From English Heritage 2007)

**Name:** Friends Meeting House, Meeting House Lane, Ulverston, South Lakeland, Cumbria

**Grade:** II\*

**Date first listed:** 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1950

**Date of last amendment:** 19<sup>th</sup> April 1996

**Details:**

ULVERSTON SD27NE MEETING HOUSE LANE 626-1/1/91 (North side) 02/03/50 Friends' Meeting House (Formerly Listed as: MEETING HOUSE LANE Friends' Meeting House) (Formerly Listed as: MEETING HOUSE LANE Stable Block at Friends' Meeting House) II\* Quaker meeting house. Dated 1688; interior altered 1814; sash windows added 1829; gable wall slated 1843. Roughcast with some sandstone ashlar dressings and some slatehanging, with slate roof. To the left of the single-storey gabled porch are 3 windows with plain reveals and projecting sills lighting the main meeting room. They were inserted in 1829 but now have C20 casements with glazing bars replacing the original glazing bar sashes. To the right of the porch there are 2 windows at both ground-floor and gallery level lighting the former women's meeting house. All are mullioned and of 2 lights with leaded glazing. Those on the ground floor are cyma-moulded and those on the 1st floor are chamfered and have hoods. The wall of the porch is cut back where it overlaps the left-hand window. The porch has a sandstone plinth and moulded doorway which has a lintel with false 4-centred arch. The lintel has a re-cut inscription: 'EX DONO G.F. [George Fox] 1688'. The inner doorway has a moulded stone surround and studded plank doors. The left-hand gable wall has slatehanging which returns to cover part of the front wall. Projecting from the right-hand gable wall is a chimney stack with offsets. Adjoining to the right is the former stable block, now converted into a meeting room. It has a lower roof which projects forwards at the left to form a canopy over a doorway. A wide doorway towards the right has plain reveals and is now filled by a glazed screen. INTERIOR: the main meeting room has a high ceiling with exposed hardwood tie beams. The timber screen at the east end of the meeting room dates from 1814 and has top-hung shutters opening at both ground-floor and gallery level. Between the passageway and the east room there are similar shutters. Both this room and the passageway have stone-flagged floors, and the room has 2 axial main ceiling beams and a fireplace with the remains of moulded jambs. HISTORICAL NOTE: George Fox bought the property at Swarthmoor in 1687 from two of Judge Fell's daughters and passed it on to the Friends with instructions on how to build the meeting house, which was registered as a place of worship in 1689. The former stable block was listed on 20/06/72. (Butler DM: Quaker Meeting Houses of the Lake Counties: London: 1978-: 123-5).