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SNY	12020
ENY	3578
CNY	6371
Parish	3083
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Archaeological Watching Brief

Friends Meeting House

Malton

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at the Friend's Meeting House, Greengate,
Malton.**

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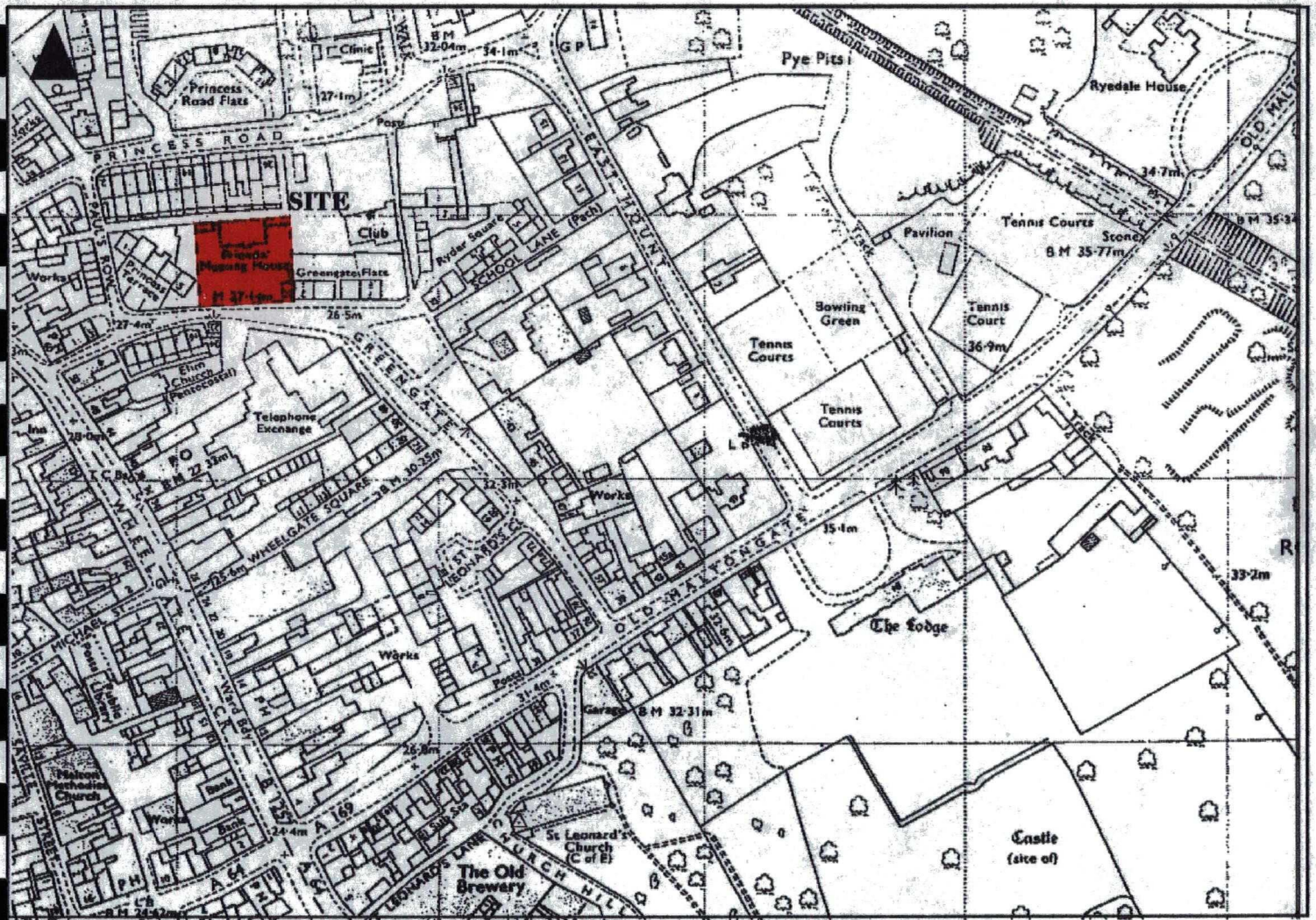


Figure 1 - Site Location Plan, Scale 1:2500

Introduction

This report concerns the results of an archaeological Watching Brief on groundworks carried out during the restoration of the Friend's Meeting House, Greengate, Malton, North Yorkshire; SE 7812 7188.

Attention had been drawn to the archaeological significance of the site through Planning Control at the Archaeology Section, North Yorkshire County Council. The significance of the site lay in its location within the medieval town of New Malton, and the fact that the northern boundary of the site formed the assumed line of the former town defences (Robinson, no. 157). Accordingly a Watching Brief condition was instituted, and the archaeological work contracted to MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd by the architects in charge of the project, Sykes Able Partnership.

Observation and recording of several areas was carried out by the writer (M R Stephens), P A Ware and K C Grieveson at several times in July and August 1993.

Results

All groundworks associated with the Meeting House's restoration were monitored, but the only area where archaeological deposits were observed was at the north-western corner of the site adjacent to the lane at the rear of the houses on Princess Road (Figs. 2 and 3). In this area, a c.0.8m wide trench was manually excavated during the installation of a land drain eastwards from the north-west corner of the site boundary. The trench achieved its maximum depth (c.1.2m) at the north-west corner of the site, and penetrated archaeological deposits at this point.

A 1.1m length of a stone structure was revealed in the southern face of the trench. Four courses of squared, fine-grained limestone were exposed, and traces of a fifth, lower course were visible at the base of the trench. The construction was of uneven courses from 14–22cm in height; the individual blocks were from 14–36cm in length. The bonding was a fine sandy mortar, 2.5Y in colour. The stone structure, context 3, was situated in a vertically-sided foundation cut (context 4); the 'fill' of this cut was void.

A layer of coarse silty sand, context 5, had been cut through by the foundation trench, context 4, to accommodate the stone structure. A layer of silty sand (context 6) was situated below context 5, and had also been cut away by 4. Context 6 possibly represents a buried soil horizon. No finds were recovered.

The construction of a roughly mortared foundation wall, context 1, corresponded to the upper two courses of context 3, in effect incorporating that part of 3. The wall, context 1, was bonded to the upper two courses of the stone structure, context 3, by a 2.5y 7/4 sandy mortar; identical mortar formed the bonding for 1. Context 1 was the foundation wall for the brick-built northern wall of the Meeting House.

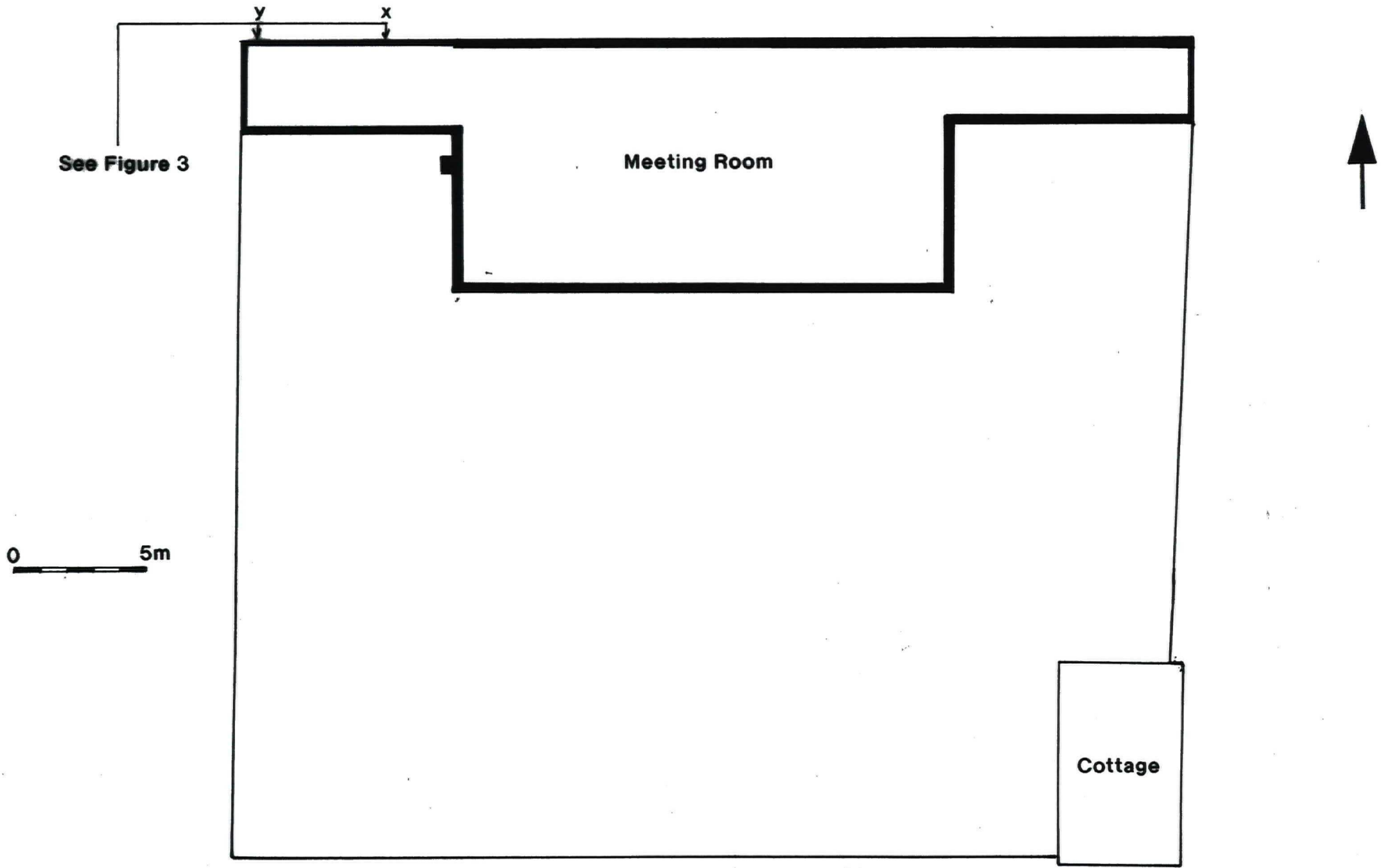


Figure 2 - Trench Location Plan

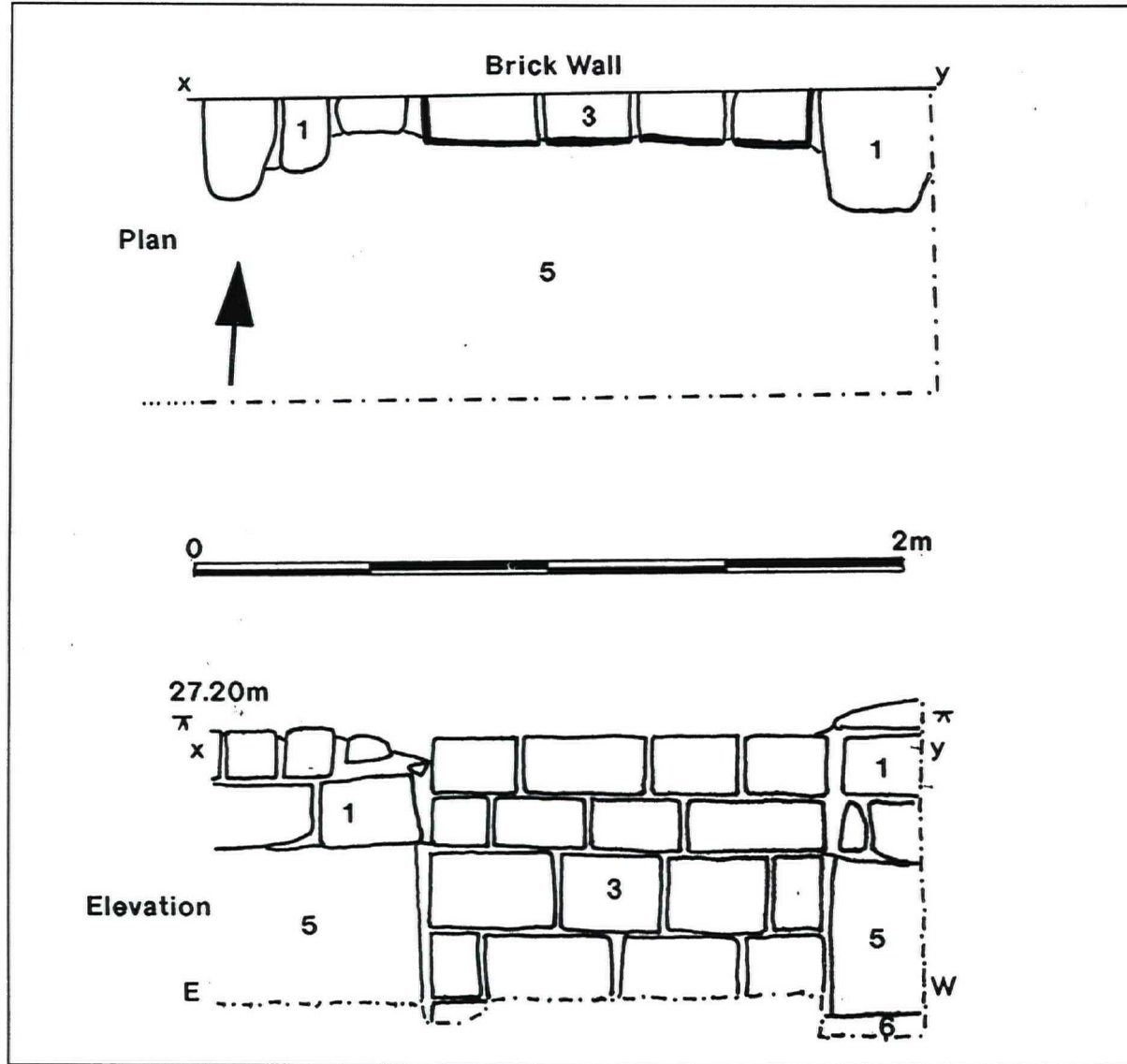


Figure 3 - Plan and Elevation

Discussion

The most significant feature observed during the Watching Brief was the stone structure, context 3. This structure pre-dates the foundation for the northern wall of the Meeting House, which was constructed in 1823, but is otherwise undated.

Dickinson's 'Map of the Burrow of New Malton' (1730) shows the area of the Friend's Meeting House to be occupied by an orchard. The orchard was separated from a bowling alley by a boundary coincident with the northern wall of the Meeting House. This boundary is interpreted by Robinson (*ibid.*) and earlier commentators (eg. Hinderwell, c.1825) to be the line of the medieval town defences. This would seem to be a reasonable supposition because the boundary in question is also marks the limit of the former Borough of New Malton.

It is not certain that the stone structure, context 3, does relate to the medieval town defences. If the structure was part of the putative town wall, it would not appear to represent part of the wall face as such, as it only forms a short, discrete length; it might represent a buttress on the northern face of a wall.

The Watching Brief, therefore, demonstrated the presence of an undated stone structure pre-dating the construction of the Friend's Meeting House. It is likely that the structure is an element of the former medieval town defences.

Bibliography

Robinson, J F (1979): *The Archaeology of Malton and Norton.*