

Figure 3 Section 2, East facing, see Figure 2 for location. Note wall foundations to south, rubble filled cut 1014 - in turn truncated by modern services



Plate 1 Foundations of SE corner of Meeting House in S foundation trench/column Pit 5, looking E



Plate 2 Wall foundations in S foundation trench, looking E

5.3 N. FOUNDATION TRENCH & GAS DIVERSION TRENCH

(Figure 4)

The northern foundation trench extended from the western side of a previously excavated gas diversion trench some 1.10m west of the end of the modern northern extension of the Arts Centre. The lowest deposit encountered, at the base of the eastern end of the trench, was a deposit of limestone fragments typically of a size 70-250mm, 1005. Interleaved between the pieces of stone was a clean, light brown clayey silt. The cleanness of this deposit suggests the likelihood that this material represents a 'natural' deposit, probably the uppermost part of frost shattered bedrock/sub-soil. Sealing 1005 was a deposit of friable, dark reddish brown, slightly clayey sandy silt, 1004, that contained occasional pebbles and small stones, flecks of charcoal, together with a couple of splinters of bone and sherds of medieval pottery. This material, which was quite homogeneous, is likely to represent a garden, or backyard, soil. Soil 1007 succeeded 1004 and was seen to be very similar in colour, texture, consistency and inclusions, particularly at the interface of the two deposits. 1007 was however slightly 'brownier' in colour and contained slightly more stone. Finds recovered from 1007 included several sherds of 18th century pottery. Deposit 1007 is again interpreted as a garden type soil. A deposit of rubbly dark brown slightly clayey sandy silt, 1003, sealed 1007. Some modern materials, including brick and plastic were noted in this

deposit. 1003 is likely to have formed as a garden type soil that has in recent times been subject to modern disturbance. At the extreme western end of the trench a modern service trench containing a drain, contexts 1008/1009, that linked up with the inspection chamber in the western trench, cut through the deposit sequence detailed above. The latest deposits encountered in the northern foundation trench related to stone metalling 1002 of the track running by the northern side of the Arts Centre and a patchy turf and topsoil, 1001, to the south of this.

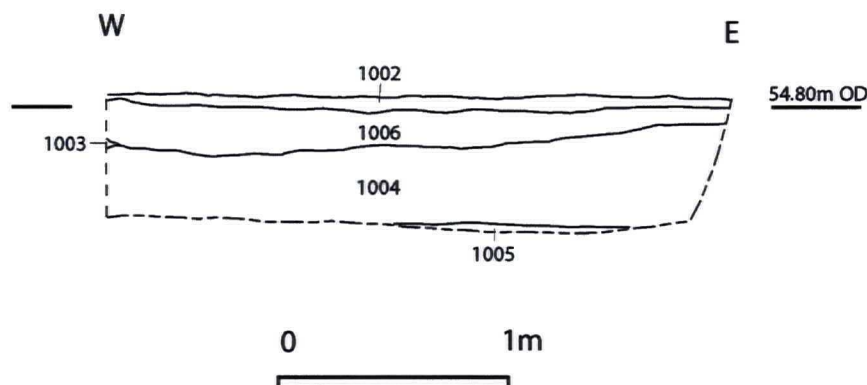


Figure 4 Section 1, South facing, see Figure 2 for location.

5.4 COLUMN PITS 6-8

(Plate 3)

Column pits 6-8 were located hard against the western wall of the former Meeting House. These pits were excavated subsequent to the internal ground reduction detailed 5.2 above, and were consequently little more than 0.30m deep below this reduced horizon. The upper part of a deposit of ?frost shattered limestone fragments intermixed with a light brown clayey silt, 1030, was observed in the base of column pit 8. This material seems likely to represent natural bedrock and forms an equivalent to 1005 (see above). Above this 'natural' horizon the bulk of the column pits were occupied by a friable, dark reddish brown slightly clayey sandy silt containing very occasional fragments of animal bone, 1031. This material bore considerable similarity to 1004. Small amounts of dark brownish grey clayey sandy silt, 1031, were present above 1004 in column pits 7 and 8. Footings for the Meeting House were exposed in the eastern sides of column pits 6-8 and were of the same form as detailed in 5.2 above.

A wall scar was observed on the north-western of the old Meeting House (Plate 4). This appears to relate to a wall that ran east – west and parallel to that revealed in the area of the south-west corner of the building (see 5.2). No footings for this were observed in column pits

8 or 4 and so it must be assumed that all foundation material was both shallow and fully dug out at the time of demolition.



*Plate 3 Wall scar on NW corner of former Meeting House, looking E
(walling to left is 20th century extension)*

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The watching brief on the new works at the Arts Centre revealed evidence of human activity spanning the medieval to modern periods. The medieval period is represented by sherds of pottery from the 12th to 15th centuries. Some of this material was derived from soils that originated, or were worked, within this time frame. The remainder was found in soils that were also associated with post-medieval pottery. All of these soils are likely to relate to garden areas that belonged to properties that fronted onto Bridge Street. 19th century and modern maps still indicate an arrangement of long narrow tenements characteristic of medieval urban layouts in this central part of the town. The absence of structural remains of the medieval and earlier post-medieval periods is of little surprise given that the area of modern works lies in the region of 50m from the Bridge Street frontage.

The foundations of parts of the mid 19th century Former Quaker Meeting House (Arts Centre) were observed in a number of locations. Rubbly deposits possibly associated with its construction were also noted, as was evidence for two contemporary and related stone walls

on the western side of the building. Modern services and surfaces represented the latest activity at the site.

7. POTTERY REPORT

By Ailsa Mainman and Ann Jenner

A small assemblage of twenty-five sherds was recovered from this site. These span the date range of the 14th to 18th centuries, although in some cases some earlier 12th century material (i.e. gritty ware and splash glazed ware) has become incorporated into later deposits.

The medieval wares include material typical of the area where production in the Hambleton hills is well established from the 13th century onwards. These include the Brandsby, Hambleton and Ryedale wares. A number of less well known, probably local, wares were also incorporated into these deposits.

This assemblage offers some dating evidence for the sequence but has little potential for further research.

| Contxt | Find | Quantity | Spot date | Details |
|---------|---------|----------|----------------|---|
| Unstrat | BF00005 | 1 | E18th c. | 1 x Ryedale type |
| 1004 | BF00006 | 8 | L14th/E15th c. | 1 x gritty ware collared rim 3 x medieval lightly oxidised bowl rim, bifid rim 2 x medieval white ware base with spots of thin green glaze similar to early York glazed 1 x late Brandsby or Hambleton rilled neck 1 x small fragment unglazed, York glazed |
| 1007 | BF00007 | 8 | 18th c. | 3 x English stoneware 1 x Humber type bowl with bifid rim 1 x gritty ware rim, fine walls, reduced core 1 x small fragment of white ware 2 x lightly oxidised splash glazed |
| 1016 | BF00009 | 2 | 14th c. | 1 x Brandsby 1 x lightly oxidised |
| 1018 | BF00010 | 1 | Post-medieval | 1 x post-medieval reduced red ware with greenish brown glazed surfaces |
| 1020 | BF00011 | 1 | 14th/15th c. | 1 x Hambleton |
| 1028 | BF00012 | 4 | Medieval | 1 x fine oxidised with thin glaze 1 x medieval grey ware 2 x white gritty ware, reduced core, fine walls |

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

| | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Research and author | Mark Johnson |
| Illustrations | Mark Johnson |
| Editor | Martin Stockwell |

9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Geological Survey (1957) Geological Survey of Great Britain, Ten Mile Map, Sheet 2

Pevsner, N (1966) The Buildings of England, Yorkshire The North Riding

Rahz, P. and Watts, L. (1995) The Quaker Burial Ground at Helmsley, An Interim Report

Tyler, A. (1979) North Yorkshire Historic Town Studies, Archaeological Priorities and Needs: Helmsley