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ENY	1238, 2033 888
CNY	1538
Parish	3083
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11-13 Wheelgate

Malton

North Yorkshire

SE 7870 7170

Interim

Archaeological Excavation Report

MAP

Archaeological Consultancy Ltd.

March 2003

**11-13 Wheelgate
Malton
North Yorkshire
SE 7870 7170**

Interim Archaeological Excavation Report

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Non-Technical Summary

Excavations were carried out the rear of two properties fronting Wheelgate, Malton, a street originating with the foundation of the borough of New Malton in the mid 12th century. Pits and structures dating to the thirteenth century were the earliest features encountered. A stone wall marked a new property boundary established in the late 13th or early 14th century. The boundary wall was used to support a number of lean-to structures forming enclosures on either side and was eventually truncated by a new building. Evidence of a major fire in the 15th or 16th century marks a hiatus in the archaeological sequence. The southern side of the former boundary was cultivated creating a thick deposit of soil over the remains of the lean-to structures. A substantial surface of large rounded limestone had been laid over the burnt deposit at the western end of the site; this was cut by one of the foundation trenches of a new building constructed over the northern side of the boundary shortly after the fire. A buttress had been added to the boundary wall on the southern side at the intersection of these two structures. A new boundary was established in the 18th century replacing the earlier buildings; two wells were associated with this later period of occupation.

1. Introduction

Between September 2002 and February 2003 three separate stages of archaeological work were carried out by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. on a development to the rear of 11- 13 Wheelgate, Malton, North Yorkshire (SE 7870 7170; Fig. 1 and 2). These two properties front one of the main streets of the medieval borough of New Malton. Two 19th century maps show the earliest

large scale plans of the layout of the properties and their associated outbuildings and boundaries (Figs. 3 and 4) but the maps do not show whether the layout originated in the medieval period. The excavations carried out on the sites have brought new evidence for the sequence of development of the sites.

The two properties are to be combined into a single retail unit with the floor space at the same level in both buildings. The total floor area is to be increased by the construction of a steel-framed structure to the rear of the properties (Fig. 5).

Between 20th of September and the 4th of October 2002 an initial evaluation excavation was carried out within a limited area revealing complex structural features.

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A further phase of evaluation and mitigation excavations to the rear of the property and within the building (called Phase 1) extended the scope of the evaluation and traced the features further. The Phase 1 works were carried out between the 11th and 22nd of November 2002.

The demolition of an outbuilding and the reduction of modern overburden over the unexcavated area at the northern side of the site were carried out on the 18th of December 2002. The area was reduced under supervision to the top of archaeological deposits or to the formation level of 24.33m A.O.D.

After consideration of the design of the new building and the state of preservation of the archaeological deposits on the site, a further scheme of works was produced to carry out a series of targeted excavations (called Phase 2). The excavated areas were located at the points of maximum intrusion into the archaeology from the proposed foundation design. These were a series of column bases for the steel frame and the linking ground beams between the column bases. In addition a limited reduction of targeted areas of the site was carried out to the formation level to create a platform from where construction would start and below which

the remaining archaeological deposits would be preserved in place. Phase 2 was carried out between the 7th and 24th of February 2003.

The following report brings together the results of all three phases of work although a further phase of Watching Briefs are to be carried out on elements of the construction phase of the development, when a main contractor is appointed.

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2. Historical and Archaeological Background

Orchard Field has long been recognised as the site of a Roman fort guarding the Derwent crossing, with a civilian settlement stretching southwards from the fort to the river (Corder, 1930 and Mitchelson, 1964). The remains of the fort are known to extend westwards in to the grounds of The Lodge, and further Roman activity was uncovered in this area during Time Team's visit to Malton in 1996 (MAP 1997).

The Borough of New Malton was founded in the mid-12th century, perhaps under royal patronage (Robinson, 1978, 14). There are 12th and 13th century references to weavers, goldsmiths, masons and mercers, and in the 14th century, to wool-merchants, showing that the borough achieved a degree of economic success. The market was first mentioned in 1283, and the fair in 1295 (ibid.). The Market Place can be seen as the economic centre of the borough, along with streets such as Wheelgate, placing the site in a key location for trade.

The canons of Old Malton priory founded a hospital, dedicated to St. Peter, for the care of the poor on Wheelgate and its vaulted 15th century undercroft survives as the cellar of the Cross Keys Inn.

Little archaeological work has been carried out within the medieval borough, information related to the Market Place being confined to the observation of foundations, and medieval and Roman finds on the site of the old Angel Inn c. 1791 (*ibid.*, no. 161), and a medieval floor and pottery in the garden of 12 Market Place in 1967 (*ibid.* no. 165). A watching brief on land to the rear of 46 Market Place recorded 13th/14th century pits and late medieval burning or destruction deposits. Further afield, Roman and medieval sherds were recovered during a Watching Brief to the rear of 47 Greengate (MAP 1994). Excavations at Carpenters Yard, on the extension to Safeway's supermarket to the south of Castlegate, recovered a small number of medieval sherds from later dumping deposits (MAP 1999).

3. Methodology

Chronological Sequence of Excavations

Evaluation and Phase 1 mitigation work

A demolition contractor removed concrete floors and hard standings in the area to the rear of 11–13 Wheelgate. An evaluation trench was excavated in an area chosen to maximize the understanding of the archaeological sequence and the potential for deposits to be affected by the proposed development (Fig. 6, A). From this evaluation it became clear that there were significant archaeological deposits on the site including structures that extended over a much larger area of the site.

A more extensive evaluation and partial mitigation program, called Phase 1, extended the excavation area (Fig. 6, B; MAP 2002 (a)). In Phase 1 the uppermost structures, Walls 011 and 08, were traced to the limit of the development footprint by extending the earlier evaluation trench and removing the overburden of gravel surfacing for the adjacent car park (MAP 2002; Para. 4.2.2) the two latest structures were recorded and removed, and a section was excavated against the southern face of the walls revealing a complex sequence of structures (MAP 2002; Para. 4.2.3). A plan and elevations of Wall 028 were recorded in preparation for the reduction of the wall to formation level.

One of the central column bases was excavated demonstrating a full sequence of archaeological deposits to natural material (Fig. 6. S1, MAP 2002(a); Para. 4.3.1).

A small sondage was excavated into the floor of No. 13 Wheelgate, the strength of the concrete floor limiting the excavation to a 0.5m square hole revealing only hardcore deposits below the concrete and a brick structure, possibly a cellar, at the base of the excavation at 0.45m depth. A proposed second small evaluation trench within the building could not be excavated because of the extreme thickness of a concrete platform that formerly supported washing machines within the launderette that occupied the building.

Phase 2 mitigation work

Following the completion of Phase 1 and a review of the results a further excavation, called Phase 2, was carried out to mitigate the effects of the groundworks over the whole area of the development and to prepare remaining deposits for preservation under the stone blinding of the new floor of the development (MAP 2002 (b)).

Following the demolition of the outbuilding and removal of modern overburden over the northern part of the site (Fig. 6 C) the archaeological deposits exposed

required some hand excavation in localized areas to reach the formation level of the floor of the extension. The area was cleaned and planned and levels taken over the area, any necessary reduction of archaeological material was carried out by hand.

The excavation of combinations of footings and column bases threatened deposits remaining within the limits of areas B and C. At the south western limit of the site, the full line of a wall was shown to be standing at least three courses high. In addition a later wall, remained in place. Both walls are situated within the area of a loading bay requiring reduction to a slightly higher finished floor level than the main part of the building.

A complex of two column bases and the foundation trenches for the bay would have damaged the archaeological deposits significantly (Fig. 6 S2 and S3)

Three proposed column bases on the northern edge of the site (Fig. 6 S4, S5 and S6) and a linking foundation trench is to be excavated below formation level into archaeological material. The development plan requires the bases to extend into the path between 13 and 15 Wheelgate that provides a fire escape and access from No. 15. The area of each column base that falls within the limits of the existing site was investigated as a representative sample of the deposits that would be present within the column base.

The area south of Wall 028 was used to store spoil from the Phase 1 and 2 excavations. The preliminary levelling of this area was carried out by controlled reduction by mechanical excavator on the 16th of December 2002 after removal of the Phase 1 spoil tip. Deposits in this area consisted of a deep deposit of garden soil. Excavation ceased at the base of the foundation of boundary walls with the Yorkshire Bank to the south, approximately at the required formation level. Any further reduction will be completed by mechanical excavator under a Watching

Brief after removing the Phase 2 spoil tip and prior to preserving the area under the stone blinding of the new floor.

Results

Natural material encountered in the excavations on the site consisted of a compact strong yellowish brown gritty sand deposit (053).

Period 1

Phase I (Fig. 7)

Post hole

A single post hole (Cut 052, filled by 051) was cut into the natural sand. The post hole was roughly circular with a diameter of 0.3m and survived to 0.4m in depth. The single deposit filling the post hole was homogenous and contained a small piece of animal horn and a single sherd of pottery dating to between the 12th and 14th centuries (Fig. 15, Section 1; Appendix 2).

Pit group

The post hole was overlaid by a subsoil of discoloured, naturally derived material (050; Fig. 15, Section 2) this deposit was in turn overlaid by a deposit of loose silty loam with frequent limestone inclusions (Contexts 039, 041 and 042; equivalent deposits, probably the southern limit of the fill of a large pit (Cut 090) excavated in S1). Although only partly exposed, the edge of Cut 090 was discerned as a steep cut line south of a later wall whose construction trench may have removed part of the northern edge of the cut. Within S1 the fill (084) was recorded as context 084, a loose silty deposit containing frequent, horizontally

laminated, limestone fragments (Fig. 15, Sections 3, 4 and 5). It is possible that the limestone was used periodically to cover an open midden and the compaction and settling of the material occurred as a result of the decay and homogenizing of the organic contents. The settling of the fill of this pit had a considerable influence on the stability of later structures built over it. A thin band of yellow clay (091) above 084 might be a cap to the midden or could just possibly be the remnant of a clay floor surface that subsided into the fill (Fig. 15, Sections 3 and 5).

Within S2 and S3 the earliest phase of activity was a sequence of inter-cutting pits. The earliest pit of the sequence in S2 was only partly excavated but appeared to have been roughly circular with very straight sides breaking sharply to a flat base (Cut 126; Fig 15, Section 6), suggesting that it might have been cut to accommodate a wattle lining. The fill of this pit (125) was very compact, sandy soil varying only slightly in shade and texture from the natural material. In the upper part of the feature slight tip lines of lighter re-deposited natural sand were visible.

A second pit with steeply sloping sides and a curved plan was partly excavated at the southern end of S2 (Cut 128; Fig. 15, Section 6). The deposit filling this feature (127) was dark grey and flecked with yellow mineral fragments suggesting that it may have been a cesspit. This pit was in turn cut by another steeply curvilinear profiled pit that contained two fills, the lower deposit (131) containing a fairly high proportion of small limestone fragments throughout, with a distinct concentration at the interface with the upper deposit. The upper fill was homogenous humic silt with little limestone content (133).

On the eastern side of S2 a shallow pit (Cut 124) had been cut into the top of deposit 125. This material was also a dark silty loam with a few fragments of limestone evenly distributed within it. Deposit 122, also a dark silty loam with evenly mixed limestone inclusions lay immediately above deposit 123. The gradual interface between this material and the pit fills 123 and 127 below

suggested that it may have been formed by working over the upper fills of the pits, perhaps within a garden, creating an organic rich soil. On the eastern side a more distinct pit profile (Cut 130) could be discerned, again filled with humic silty loam (129; Fig. 15, Section 7)

A single pit, possibly the western extreme of pit 132 was excavated within S3 (Cut 136; Fig. 15, Section 8). The profile of the pit showed of a gently curving upper edge, breaking to a more distinct and steeper sided cut. The lowest fill was composed of compact limestone fragments (137) similar to the upper concentration in deposit 131. Above this was a dark silty loam with few limestone inclusions, which conformed to the less steeply curved profile (135). A further deposit of similar material (134) extended across the full width of the excavation and could be equated with deposit 122 representing the product of the reworking of the upper fill of the pit (Fig. 15, Section 8).

A north-south masonry wall (Wall 049) may belong to this phase of activity. The wall was 0.65m wide and built from irregular rectangular limestone blocks with a face on the eastern and western sides and was truncated to a single course by the structures of Phase 2 (Fig. 15, Sections 2 and 9).

Dating of Phase 1

Six of the pit fills (084, 125, 127, 129, 134, 135) contained pottery sherds, giving a date range between the 12th and 14th centuries. The earlier pits perhaps tended toward the late 12th / early 13th centuries, and the later group although containing sherds whose date range extends into the 14th century suggesting a period of activity spanning the 13th century (Appendix 2).

Phase 2 (Fig. 8)

Boundary Wall 28

A layer of soil covered Wall 049 (035, 046 and 038; equivalent deposits), and appeared to have been formed by intensive working of the soil probably by cultivation. The foundation trench for Wall 28 was cut into this deposit (Cut 034 and 048 observed in separate areas; Fig. 15, Section 9 and Fig. 16, Section 10).

Wall 028 was the most substantial structure remaining on the site at 0.6m wide and 13m long. Constructed of flat limestone slabs with regular faces on the south and north sides, this feature survived along its length to at least five courses above foundation level. A single offset course at the base of the wall projected to a maximum of 0.08m from the face on the southern side (033). On the northern side an offset of 0.12m was observed at the top of the first five foundation courses. Where the foundations were exposed in S2 and S5 the wall stood to seven courses in total.

The upper course of the wall had been truncated to form a level footing for a later structure and one or two further courses of slabs existed east of the later structure beyond the scar of its construction cut. The effect of building the wall over a series of loosely compacted pits was visible in areas where the wall had subsided (north facing elevation S2) or spread (eastern end above fill of deep feature) under the influence of the poor substrate. The construction cut for Wall 028 was observed on the southern side only, consisting of a near vertical sided narrow slot just accommodating the lowest offset course (cut 034 and 048 equivalent but seen in separate excavation areas; Fig. 15, Section 2). On the northern side the wall had been constructed hard up against the cut with no backfill to distinguish the interface with the deposits below.

Wall 028 certainly extended beyond the western limits of the excavation and is likely to have been a boundary wall enclosing an area rather than a building because there are no floors or contemporary walls to suggest a roofed structure.

Four courses of east west running limestone wall 0.6m wide and standing 0.5m high represent a stratigraphically contemporary structure within S1 (Wall 085; Fig. 15, Section 5). It is likely that the remaining courses of Wall 085 are the element that had been contained within a putative construction cut. This wall was not aligned with wall 028 and may represent a building within the space enclosed by Wall 028.

In S2 and S3 two stretches of the same stone surface or path (119) were encountered. A kerb of irregular stone blocks with a roughly linear face on the southern edge formed the limit of a less substantial surface of compacted limestone fragments to the north. The surface had a maximum width of 1m at the western end (Fig. 15, Sections 6, 7 and 8).

A stub of mortared limestone wall (Wall 121) with an associated spread of demolition material (120) overlay surface 119 at its northern end.

Dating of Phase 2 Structures

The boundary wall was built directly over the fills of the Phase 1 pit sequence. Pottery found in two deposits (032 and 027) filling the construction cut also indicated a date from the 13th to 14th centuries. On stratigraphical grounds it is likely that this sequence of structures dates to the later part of this range perhaps late 13th or early 14th century (Appendix 2).

Phase 3 (Fig. 9)

Structural additions to Wall 28

Walls 031 and 065 seem to represent lean to buildings or divisions and were built abutting the southern face of Wall 028 at right angles, lying over the backfill of the construction cut (context 27; Fig. 16, Section 11). These structures post dated the construction of Wall 028 but presumably were in use at the same time. Both structures were built of courses of irregular blocks of limestone. Wall 031 was 0.25m wide and had been truncated to only single course approximately 0.5m from the joint with Wall 28. Wall 065 was better preserved with 2m surviving with a width of 0.5m; the southern end was truncated by a modern intrusion (filled by deposit 089 which was cut by pit cut 086, filled by deposit 087 and overlaid by deposit 088 all recent deposits and not illustrated).

Structure truncating Wall 028

Two stone walls formed a small right angled structure that had truncated the eastern end of Wall 028 at its junction with Wall 065 (Wall 081 and Wall 075). Wall 081 was abutted by the remnant of two clay floors (Contexts 073 and 071) heavily truncated by later construction activity. An occupation layer of clayey material separated the two floors (072). Although it could not be established definitively because of later intrusion, it appeared that this structure was a medieval truncation of Wall 028 its eastern end being remodelled to accommodate a new building.

At its southern end Wall 081 had been heavily damaged by later construction activity and was cut by a pit (Cut 064; filled by 060). A modern robber cut divided the two areas of clay floor within the structure (Cut 061, filled by 063 and 061).

The first group of structures utilised Wall 28 within their structure, the second group truncated the wall suggesting the break down of the integrity of that boundary.

Extensive deposit of fire debris

An extensive deposit, composed of silt mixed with a very high proportion of red burnt clay fragments with lenses of ash and charcoal, spread over the site in a roughly rectangular area (Contexts 066, 076 and 077 linked by excavation of larger areas in Phase 2; Fig. 15, Sections 3,4,5,6,7 and 8). The debris overlapped the northern face and uppermost footing course of Wall 028 within S2. There was no sign of this deposit south of wall 028 suggesting that wall had formed the limit of the burning that created the deposit. On the northern side of Wall 028 the deposit marks a hiatus between two broad periods of activity with all stratigraphic sequences eventually resolving to a direct relationship with either the burnt debris or Wall 028.

During this period deposits of worked garden soil were formed on the southern side of Wall 28. The lower deposit (30, 37 and 46 equivalent deposits) overlay the earlier group of structural additions on the southern side of Wall 28. Two further deposits (029 and 036 equivalent deposits overlaid by 026) of similar material distinguished by inclusions or slight colour differences completed the sequence of thick deposits of worked soil.

Dating of Phase 3 Structures

The pottery from the burnt deposit north of the boundary wall gave a date range of the 15th to 16th centuries marking the transition to the second period of occupation on the site. On the southern side deep deposits of cultivated soil also produced pottery of this period. It is clear that all the previous structural arrangements were abandoned or demolished at the end of this period and the area south of the wall was given over to cultivation for a long period of time (Appendix 2).

Period 2

Phase 1 (Fig. 10)

Continuity of activity between Period 1 and 2 is represented by the cultivation of soils on the southern side of Wall 028. This is likely to have been ongoing when the northern side of the site was re-occupied, with the extensive burnt deposit being levelled prior to the construction of a new building.

At the northern side of the site within the limit of S4, another deep pit was partly excavated (Cut 114). The excavation established the north western edge of the feature showing it to have a curved profile and a depth of 1m (Fig. 16, Section 12). Three distinct deposits filled the pit, the interfaces between them being roughly horizontal suggesting several phases of deposition with enough intervening time for each deposit to settle. The earliest fill (115) was soft clay silt with fairly dense limestone inclusions. Pottery from this primary deposit indicated a 15th century date demonstrating the continuation of domestic rubbish disposal on the northern side of the site. Above this a band of coarse silty sand (118) may represent a capping deposit dumped over cess. Above this was a more mixed deposit of silty sand containing irregularly distributed limestone fragments and small pieces of tile more consistent with being a levelling deposit intended to obliterate the pit below before the next phase of activity.

Ditch and repair to Wall 28

A small ditch (Cut 116) with a shallow curved profile and sloping sides had been cut at right angles to Wall 028 intersecting at the western end. There was evidence of a partial repair or possibly a rough spanning structure within the north face of 028. The ditch had been excavated after the deposition of the fire debris and may have been an improvised drain. The ditch was backfilled with limestone rubble (117), possibly as preparation for a new phase of construction.

Levelling spread

The uppermost deposit in S1 against the north side of Wall 028 in general was silty clay rich in limestone fragments (024). Deposit 024 appears to be a levelling dump spread after a truncation of deposits had been carried out ready for rebuilding (Fig. 16, Section 12).

Phase 2 (Fig. 11)

Stone surface

An irregular surface composed of large limestone slabs, infilled with smaller chunks of limestone (111) was constructed over a levelling deposit of rubble (112). This levelling deposit may have been continuous with the limestone rubble backfill of the drainage ditch. Pottery from this deposit also indicated a 15th to 16th century date.

Phase 3 (Fig. 11)

Wall fragment

A single course of wall 4m long and 0.7m wide, built of limestone blocks, was partially exposed at the north eastern corner of the site (Wall 106). This wall may have been the sill wall for a timber framed building fronting Wheelgate. The wall directly overlay the deep pit Cut 114. There was no other stratigraphic evidence to date the structure.

New Building aligned with Wall 028

It was at this point that the superstructure of Wall 028 seems to have been reduced to a level at the base of the construction cut for a structure made up of Wall 011 and structures 012 and 013. Wall 011 had a north facing elevation surviving to as many as six courses laid partly on the surface of deposit 024 and partly utilising the truncated earlier Wall 028 as a platform (Fig. 16, Section 10). At the eastern end the structure of Wall 11 became less regularly coursed as it curved round northwards at an angle to its original line, the last stretch being composed of single blocks (Structure 012, continuous with Wall 011). The southern side of Wall 011 was very decayed and consisted of a course of large sandstone blocks crumbling in situ with an estimated dimension of 0.5 x 0.3 x 0.3m (Structure 012). These blocks were also overlapped by the upper deposit of garden soil, suggesting either a continuing process of soil formation on the southern side or that the wall was cut into the deposit. The latter explanation is the most likely. It is possible the southern side was an eroded chamfer course suggesting that it was an exterior face. At the curve where Wall 011 met Structure 013, the courses of limestone of Wall 011 had subsided into a void created by the settling of the fill of the deep pit below (Cut 090).

Western Limit of Building

A substantial wall consisted of irregularly squared limestone blocks standing three courses high with the lowest off set course projecting 0.05cm to the east (Wall 093). The western end of the wall was finished with a pad of clay (113, not illustrated) that abutted the repair to Wall 028 associated with the drainage ditch. On the eastern side the construction cut for the wall (cut 109) had been removed by later activity but on the western side it could be seen cutting through surface 111. The cut was filled with gritty crushed limestone with occasional larger fragments (110)

A curved buttress (044) was added to Wall 028 at the western end, directly opposite the joint between 028 and Wall 093. Consisting of coursed limestone blocks the buttress was 0.4m wide at the centre of the curve and 2m long. This may have been added to counter the thrust of Wall 093 at the point where the drain had undermined Wall 028. The construction cut for the buttress (cut 045) had been excavated into the garden soil (deposit 046) built up against the southern face of Wall 028 that sealed the lean to structures 031 and 065. The deposit filling the construction cut (043) was a distinctive yellowy brown gritty material that contrasted strongly with the dark loam below.

Dating of Phase 3 Building

No internal structures were associated with the building because of extensive later truncation. Dating of the structures must rely on relative stratigraphic position above Phase 2 and pottery incorporated within Wall 11 indicating a 15th to 16th century date (Appendix 2).

Period 3

Phase 1

Dumps overlying Wall 093

Wall 093 appears to have formed relatively long lasting limit to the plot behind the two properties. Heavy truncation in later years for the foundations of sheds and extensions had utilized Wall 093 as their western limit. An undisturbed sequence of deposits was preserved on the western side of the wall. A level spread of sandy loam with frequent limestone inclusions (099, not illustrated) had been deposited over the fill of the construction cut for Wall 093.

Levelling deposit

An extensive deposit of silty clay overlapped Wall 11 and was spread over the area north of the structure (023). This deposit had been truncated by the action of levelling (Interface labelled context 016) and backfilling with hardcore (015) to form the base of the demolished garage. A small number of structural elements relating to the garage remained in place (Structure 003, 004 and 005, deposit 014)

Dating of Phase 1

No finds were recovered from Deposit 23. It appears that this material was deposited after extensive clearing of the site. The deposit was spread evenly over the eastern part of the site and was overlaid by the structures of Phase 2 suggesting a date prior to the second half of the 18th century. Deposit 099 contained pottery dating to the 17th or 18th century and indicated a fairly rapid build up of material during this period that could not be determined in the heavily truncated eastern part of the site (Appendix 2).

Phase 2 (Fig. 12)

New boundary wall

Wall 008 formed a new alignment to the boundary between the two properties and directly overlaid the levelling deposit 023. The wall was roughly three courses high along most of its 7m length. The limit of an area dug out for a hardcore sub base for the floor of the garage behind 13 Wheelgate was the northern face of Wall 008, which had been truncated to a depth below the level of its foundation cut, and was probably left standing when the area was dug out.

Three parallel stone sleeper walls (056, 067, 068 and 069) infilled with modern brick rubble appear to be a demolished part of the remnant of the standing stone building incorporated within the back of 11 Wheelgate. This may be contemporary with the later boundary Wall 8. A rectangular chimney base had been cut into the western end of the sleeper walls (Structure 055, Cut 058). A silty soot deposit was spread over this structure (059).

Contemporary well shaft

A deep cut feature (Cut 078) with an irregular linear upper profile breaking to a circular shaft toward the base appeared to be sealed by the levelling spread deposit 24, however an irregular sub circular deposit of limestone in loamy material observed on the surface of 24 may have been the upper part of the fill (092) of 78. The fill (092) consisted of loosely packed limestone chunks with frequent voids (Fig. 15, Section 4). The location of the feature corresponds to a blocked well marked on the developers' initial survey.

Dating of Phase 2

A considerable quantity of pottery had been incorporated into the structure of Wall 008 giving a convincing date of the later half of the eighteenth century. This accorded well with the latest pottery from deposit 092 filling the well shaft (Appendix 2).

Phase 3 (Fig. 13)

On its southern side Wall 008 had been cut through the remains of Wall 11. A void had been created between the two walls and a primary deposit of stones (017) had tumbled forward from Wall 011 into the void.

A rubbish pit (cut 021) was cut into the space between the two walls. Deposit 18 filling the pit contained large amounts of mid-late 18th century pottery within a dark humic soil, this deposit also filled the void created by a robber pit (cut 020) dug into the earlier Wall 011.

Deposit 018 was partly removed by the action of clearing a space for the construction of a small 'L' shaped structure consisting of two small walls (10 and 022). This structure possibly acted as a brace between the faces of the two walls that continued to subside into the fill of the large pit below (Fig. 16, Section 14). The void continued to be used to dump household rubbish. The structure can be dated on stratigraphic grounds and in comparison with cartographic evidence to the period of the mid 18th to the mid 19th century.

Stone well

A well constructed of coursed limestone blocks was exposed at the north west edge of the site close to the location of Column Base S6. Some of the fill deposit

was removed demonstrating that it had silted up completely or was backfilled or in the 19th century. The construction date of the well could not be established but it is likely to post date the structures of Period 2 -Phase 3.

Phase 4 (Fig. 014)

A further deposit of small limestone fragments in a dark loam matrix (009) had built up against the western side of the L shaped structure. Above this material two intercut pits had further truncated the walls below. Pit cut 006 contained the skeleton of a dog (007), and was cut in turn by a small sub-circular pit (cut 002), filled with a mixed deposit of dark loamy material (001).

Deposit 099 was cut by three shallow pits cuts (098, 101 and 103). Filled with mixed deposits of dark sandy loam (Deposits 100, 102 and 104 respectively) pit 101 contained the skeleton of a small dog within its fill (102).

A thick deposit of very mixed dark sandy loam overlay pit fills 100, 102 and 104 forming the substrate for the existing car park and the foundations of a shed demolished in the early phase of the current development and an associated drain (Structures 95 and 97).

Dating of Phase 5

It is likely that the pits and spreads of Phase 5 can be attributed to the 19th century although extensive truncation and discontinuity of the stratigraphic sequences provides little supporting evidence except stratigraphic position and incorporation within buildings that were formerly standing on the site (Appendix 2).

5. Conclusions

The excavations at 11-13 Wheelgate have demonstrated four different uses of the space enclosed by the site. The earliest evidence for occupation is the inter-cutting pits and a single post hole that suggest the area was at the margins of domestic occupation and had been used to dispose waste. This activity took place around the 13th century, within the first century of the foundation of New Malton. The erosion of the distinct upper edges of the pits into a homogeneous soil suggests that the site was a yard or garden where waste pits were periodically dug and then abandoned when full and then the upper deposits would be reworked into the garden soil.

This regime of low-level occupation was replaced in the later part of the 14th century by the establishment of the boundary wall and a later group of associated lean to structures forming rectangular divisions of space. These structures could not be conclusively called buildings because of the lack of floor surfaces or occupation material within them but they were certainly used to create enclosures or yards. The underlying pit sequences showed no indication of a pre-determined property boundary or limit and so it is likely that the major land division created by the boundary wall was newly established. This new vigour and relatively sophisticated structural activity coincides with the period where documentary evidence records the growth of prosperous wool and cloth traders in the town.

Evidence of a major fire in the later 15th century, creating a thick layer of debris north of the boundary wall, brings this occupation to a close and marks a general change in the occupation pattern. The evidence of a major fire observed in watching brief at 46 Market Place in Malton might be evidence of a more general conflagration within the town in the later 15th century.

A new structure, possibly a single self-contained building was constructed along the line of the former boundary wall. The southern wall of this structure should

perhaps be seen as restating the land division rather than being a deliberate reconstruction of the wall that formerly marked the boundary. South of the boundary wall intensive cultivation formed a deep deposit of loam against the wall face. Dickinson's map of Malton from 1730 (Robinson 1978) shows many gardens and cultivated plots within the town, particularly on the eastern side of Wheelgate. It is likely that as the wool trade failed in the later medieval period the building of the contracting town may have been demolished and the land reclaimed for market gardens. The northern part of the site seems to have been occupied with a stone building but south of the boundary the plot was turned over to cultivation for an extended period.

The new boundary wall established in the 18th century, replacing the medieval layout, interrupted the line established by the original boundary wall. This new structure was associated with existing walls of stone preserved within the standing buildings and suggests that the layout of the two properties presently fronting Wheelgate was established in the middle part of the eighteenth century.

In conclusion it is possible to put forward a model for the development of this area of Malton. A formal re-organisation of the land and the establishment of a major enclosed space with a walled boundary replaced an informal occupation of relatively intensive character. The extent of the remodelling indicates an agent with the capacity to plan the new layout and possessing the fundamental property rights that could facilitate a redistribution of land. Whether this was a function of increased general prosperity of individual merchants or traders, or of the Church or Crown acting as a developer can only be established when further work in Malton establishes whether the structures revealed in the excavation are unusually complex for such a market town or are typical of this regional centre in prosperous times.

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