

## ***Quaker Meeting House, Bangor***

*Dean Street, Bangor, LL57 1UR*

*National Grid Reference: SH 58367 72293*



### ***Statement of Significance***

***Bangor Meeting House was built in 1983 and extended in 2007. The modern building has no heritage significance, but it fits well into the neighbourhood and serves its community well.***

### ***Evidential value***

***The building has no evidential value, although the site may have some archaeological potential.***

### ***Historical value***

***The meeting house has low historical significance as a modern building.***

### ***Aesthetic value***

***The simple modern building is well-designed for its purpose and fits into the townscape of Bangor using local vernacular materials for external finishes.***

### ***Communal value.***

***The meeting house has high communal value.***

## **Part 1: Core data**

1.1 Area Meeting: *North Wales*

- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0009280*
- 1.3 Owner: *North Wales Area Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Gwynedd County Council*
- 1.5 National heritage body: *Cadw*
- 1.6 Community: *Bangor*
- 1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*
- 1.8 NHLE: *N/A*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *No*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date: *1983*
- 1.13 Architect: *Adam and Frances Voelcker*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *9 November 2015*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Marion Barter*
- 1.16 Name of contact made on site: *Frank Brown*
- 1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *None*
- 1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*
- 1.19 Information sources:

D.Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain, Vol. 2*, p849, 1999

Local meeting survey and research by Martin Morley 2015

## **Part 2: The Meeting House & Burial Ground: history, contents, use, setting and designation**

### 2.1. Historical background

An early Quaker meeting had a meeting house in Bangor until 1732. The meeting apparently lapsed and it was not until the early twentieth century that a meeting was re-established, in about 1920. The meeting hired rooms for worship from the college, until plans for a purpose-built meeting house were prepared in 1982 by architects Adam and Frances Voelcker. The meeting house was built on a vacant site at the junction of Dean Street and Brick Street, previously occupied by three houses. An extension for a larger foyer, an additional room for children and a library was built in c.2007, by the same architects.

### 2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The meeting house was built in 1983, and designed by Adam and Frances Voelcker. It is constructed of concrete block, with grey pebble-dash render to the exterior and a Welsh slate roof with clay ridges and plastic rainwater goods. Softwood windows are stained brown, with slate sills and are mainly single glazed, apart from windows on the 2007 library extension which are double-glazed. The building is L-plan with the main meeting room in a single

storey range to the south end, and ancillary spaces in a 2-storey range to the north. The front elevation faces Dean Street and the south-west; a lean-to timber and glazed entrance porch is towards the north end, with the clerestory windows of the main meeting room to the south. The left return is the north-west gable end with three ground floor windows and one to the first floor; to the left of this, the 2007 library extension projects slightly towards the road. The rear elevation of the main meeting room faces the small garden, with a tall 3-light window; the south-east elevation of the north extension has a glazed door also leading into the garden.

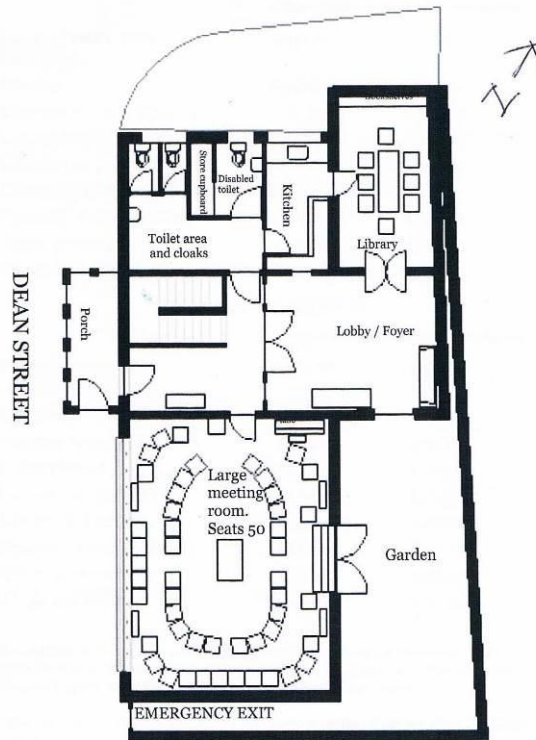


Fig.1: ground floor plan of meeting house (Bangor Meeting)

The interior is simply finished with plain plastered walls and ceiling. The main meeting room is a light and airy space, open to the 3-bay roof which has two king post trusses and exposed purlins. The rooms to the north end of the meeting house are smaller and arranged on two floors with a dog-leg staircase accessed from the front hall. The upper floor rooms are partly in the roof space with sloping ceilings.

### 2.3. Loose furnishings

The meeting house does not contain any historic furnishings; seating in the meeting room comprises loose upholstered chairs arranged in a circle around a simple pine table.

### 2.4. Attached burial ground

N/A.

### 2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house lies in Lower Bangor, on a corner site in a grid of busy streets between the main shopping street and the university. The area is densely developed with a mix of

mid-twentieth century housing, commercial and leisure buildings including a night club on the opposite corner. There are vacant retail premises nearby and the surroundings have rather a run-down appearance, reflecting the challenging socio-economic conditions in Bangor. The meeting house directly fronts the footway with no garden space to the front, but there is a small walled courtyard garden to the rear. No detached burial grounds are known in the area.

#### 2.6. Listed status

The building is not listed and would not meet listing criteria as it is a relatively modern building.

#### 2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

The site was previously occupied by three houses of unknown date, and is close to the heart of medieval Bangor, so there may be some archaeological potential, depending on the extent of ground disturbance.

### **Part 3: Current use and management**

*See completed volunteer survey by Martin Morley*

#### 3.1. Condition

i) Meeting House: Good. The last QI was undertaken on 18 July 2013, carried out by A & F Voelcker. The only works required since have been the repair of some rotten window frames, which has been addressed.

ii) Attached burial ground (if any): *N/A*

#### 3.2. Maintenance

The meeting has a sinking fund to cover the cost of maintenance, funded from lettings revenue.

#### 3.3. Sustainability

The meeting does not use the sustainability toolkit, but has taken steps to reduce its environmental impact; 16 solar panels have been installed on the roof facing Dean Street. The meeting recycles as much as possible and waste is responsibly disposed of.

#### 3.4. Amenities

The meeting has all the facilities it needs. There are adequate lavatories, a kitchen on the ground floor and the first floor meeting room also has a small kitchenette.

The building is close to the town centre and within walking distance from regular bus routes. There is no on-site car park or secure cycle parking, but there is free on-street parking on Sundays.

#### 3.5. Access

An access audit has not been undertaken. There is level access into and throughout the ground floor, but the first floor does not have a stair lift or other lift access. There is a toilet suitable for people with disabilities on the ground floor, and a hearing loop for the main meeting room.

### 3.6. Community Use

The building is used by Quakers for around 4 hours per week, and for around 24 hours per week by other groups. Bangor Meeting has a lettings policy which is available on their website ([www.bangorquakers.org.uk/contact-lettings](http://www.bangorquakers.org.uk/contact-lettings)). The meeting house is popular due to the location, reasonable cost, and the quiet and warm rooms.

### 3.7. Vulnerability to crime

The meeting has experienced some anti-social behaviour due to the building's location opposite a night club, with litter being the main issue, and occasional damage for example to down-pipes. Cash was recently stolen from inside the meeting house and reported to the police. The meeting has developed liaison with the local neighbourhood police, Street Pastors.

### 3.8. Plans for change

The meeting has no plans to alter the building in the near future.

## **Part 4: Impact of Change**

### 4.1. To what extent is the building amenable or vulnerable to change?

*i) As a Meeting House used only by the local Meeting.* The building currently serves the Meeting well, but if remodelling were needed, there are no heritage constraints. The site is restricted and there is little room for further addition.

*ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use.* The meeting house is well-used by community groups already, but alterations could be made to accommodate wider use, such as a stair lift if required.

*iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House.* The building has no heritage significance and could be readily adapted for another use such as community or business use, if the Meeting ceased.

## **Part 5: Category: 4**