

Friends Meeting House, Bournville

65 Linden Road, Birmingham, B30 1JT

National Grid Reference: SP 04456 81405



Statement of Significance

The meeting house has high heritage value as a purpose-built early twentieth century building, built at the expense of George Cadbury as part of the Bournville model village and designed by locally important architect William Alexander Harvey.

Evidential value

This is a purpose-built structure of 1905, and the site is of low evidential value. The Birmingham Historic Environment Record has not identified the site for any archaeological interest.

Historical value

The meeting house is located within George Cadbury's model village at Bournville, laid out from 1895 and designed by William Alexander Harvey. The building has high historic significance as part of the overall development of Bournville and has strong associations with the Cadbury family.

Aesthetic value

The meeting house is large and unlike most Quaker meeting houses it is not a building of simplicity. The front elevation of the Arts and Crafts style meeting house has high aesthetic value, while other parts of the building are of low aesthetic value, notably the later extensions. The association with the architect William Alexander Harvey adds to the aesthetic value; Harvey was influenced by architects such as Baillie Scott and Voysey. Internally, the wagon roof and organ gallery contribute to the building's high aesthetic value.

Communal value

The building was originally built for Quaker use and the meeting house is a popular venue for local community groups. Its association with the Cadbury family also links it to Bournville model village and other buildings paid for by the family, which collectively form part of the local identity. The meeting house has high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Central England*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0002840*
- 1.3 Owner: *Bournville Village Trust*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Birmingham City Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *West Midlands*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Birmingham*
- 1.7 Listed status: *II*
- 1.8 NHLE: *1076294*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *Bournville Village*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*

1.12 Dates: 1905; 1923;1924;1960; 1988

1.13 Architects: *William Alexander Harvey; not established; not established; Selby Clewer (Bournville Village Trust); Morton and Hayhow Architects.*

1.14 Date of visit: 7 November 2015

1.15 Name of report author: *Emma Neil*

1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Harriet Martin*

1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *Not applicable*

1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*

1.19 Information sources:

Birmingham City Council, *Bournville Village Conservation Area Designation Report, 1974.*

David M. Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1999), vol. II, pp. 623-624

Historic England, *English Garden Cities: An Introduction, 2010*

Religious History: Places of worship, in *A History of the County of Warwick: Volume 7, the City of Birmingham* ed. W.B. Stephens (London, 1964), pp. 434-482 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/warks/vol7/pp434-482>.

The Cadbury Story, <https://www.cadbury.co.uk/the-story>

Anne Giles and Howard Saundersh, Local Meeting Survey, October 2015.

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

2.1 Historical background

The history of the Bournville Meeting begins at Bournville Works in Stirchley. From 1882, a Meeting known as the Bournville Factory Meeting met for ten years in what was described as a small dining room near Mosley's Lodge at Stirchley railway station. The foundation of the Meeting was related to the relocation of Cadbury's cocoa and chocolate works from Bridge Street in the center of Birmingham to their new site to the south of the city, re-named Bournville in 1879. By 1892 Friends worshipped at the Stirchley Institute, still known as the Bournville Meeting until a purpose built meeting house was built in 1913.

Following the opening of the new Bournville factory in 1879, George Cadbury, a Quaker built a small number of dwellings for key workers close to the factory. In 1893, Cadbury purchased a further 120 acres to create a large garden suburb and provide his workers with quality homes. By 1900, 313 houses had been built and Cadbury founded the Bournville Village Trust. The Trust provided buildings for the community in Bournville Village including shops, Ruskin Hall, an Anglican Parish Church and the Friends Meeting House.

The meeting house was built to the designs of William Alexander Harvey of Birmingham, the consulting architect for the Bournville Village Trust and opened in 1905. The completed building was larger than the original designs as Harvey added a fourth bay during the early construction phase. Butler (1999) describes that the community use of the meeting house led to features that would not normally be seen in Quaker meeting houses, notably the gift of

an organ in 1915 by George and Elizabeth Cadbury; following this the meeting house was referred to as a 'Quaker Cathedral'.



Figure 1: Bournville Meeting House in 1907 (Bournville MH Archive)

The meeting house was extended and altered during the twentieth century, including an extension in 1923 for a small hall with adjoining kitchen and store room, and buttresses were built on the east side. In 1924, a niche was made for a bust of George Cadbury with a columbarium for his ashes (he died in 1922). Internal changes to the meeting room in 1935 included the removal of the original rostrum; a platform enclosed with a balustrade was replaced with a three-step platform, and the tongue and groove paneling within the arch to the south wall was removed. In 1960 an extension was made for a children's room with smaller library and cloakrooms by Selby Clewer the chief architect at the Bournville Village Trust. Finally in 1988, the library was opened to make a lobby area, the main hall was re-roofed, internal front doors were added, and ancillary facilities were reconfigured by Morton and Hayhow Architects.



Figure 2: Interior views of meeting house in 1906 (Bournville MH Archive)

2.2 The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

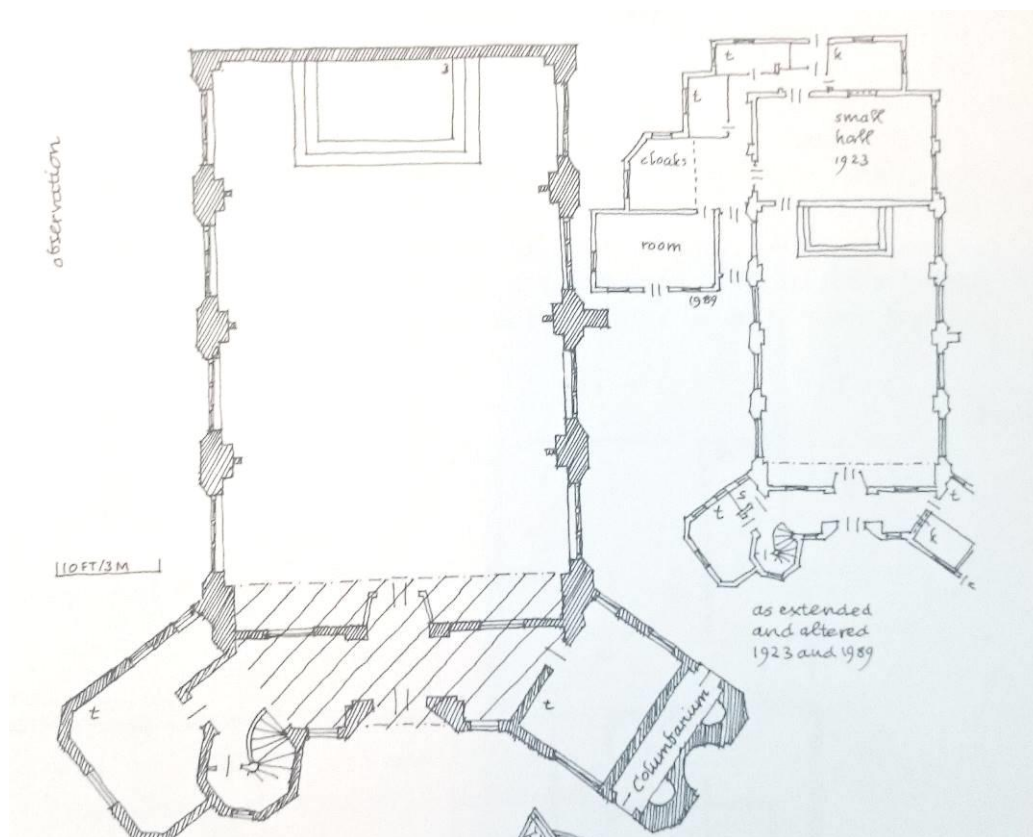


Figure 3: Ground floor plan of the meeting house as reconstructed by Butler (north is to the top; not to scale) (Butler (1999), vol. II, p.623)

The present meeting house was built in five phases. The original plan of the meeting house was built to the designs by William Alexander Harvey and opened in 1905. Roughly T-plan and built of red brick laid in Flemish bond, with stone dressings and the roof covered in clay tiles. The principal entrance to the south has a tall, gabled front with splayed wings and an off-centre tower. The central arched doorway has five plain orders, flanked either side by small 2-light mullioned windows; above is a tall 2-light mullioned and transomed window and a sundial to the gable apex. To the east and west are low wings containing subsidiary rooms, which project diagonally. On the gable-end of the east wing is an arched alcove containing a columbarium with a bust of George Cadbury, created in 1924. In the angle of the west wing and the entrance is an octagonal staircase turret with high pointed roof and 1-light leaded windows. The east and west elevations of the meeting room have 3-light and 4-light segmental-headed timber windows. On the south-west corner of the main range is a tall chimney stack. Both roof pitches have 2-light and 3-light flat-roofed or hipped dormer windows.

The 1923 addition to the north gable-end forms an additional meeting room, with kitchen, store and toilets. The smaller meeting room and kitchen addition are each set-back from and built in a sympathetic style to the original meeting house.

The 1960 addition, designed by Selby Clewer, chief architect at the Bournville Village Trust is to the north end of the west elevation, connected by a shallow flat-roofed link. This 3-bay range is aligned east to west and now forms a secondary entrance. It is built of red brick laid in stretcher bond.

The final addition is on the north side of the 1960s extension and wraps around the north-east corner of the 1923 extension, forming an irregular polygonal footprint. It was built to the designs of Morton and Hayhow Architects in 1988, the builder was Trevor Lacy. It is built in red brick with flat roofs covered in felt.

Internally, the meeting room is accessed through the main west entrance which leads into a small lobby area with red octagonal tiled floor, the walls are exposed buff brick with toilet facilities to the west along with stairs leading to the gallery and organ loft. To the east is a small kitchen area and additional toilet facilities. The meeting room is a large, with a high space which is well lit. It has an arch-braced wagon roof, with the trusses rising from the floor, with four roof lights to each side. The flooring is parquet and the walls have vertical tongue and groove panelling to dado height with plain plaster above. The north end of the meeting room has a three-step platform with arched panel in the north wall with the inscription: "GOD IS A SPIRIT AND THEY THAT WORSHIP HIM MUST WORSHIP HIM IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH". To the south, is the gallery with a clock face and a pipe organ by Harrison and Harrison of Durham (included on the National Pipe Organ Register), a gift from George Cadbury and his wife in commemoration of their silver wedding, opened on 21st November 1915.

At the north end of the meeting room a doorway towards the west end leads into the additional meeting room of 1923. The doorway to the far north of the west wall leads into a lobby area with access to the west entrance, front room (children's room), library, kitchen, cloak room and toilet facilities.

2.3 Loose furnishings

The meeting house contains a Jacobean table and five chairs on a platform which are part of the Laurence Cadbury collection based at Selly Manor.



Figure 4: Jacobean table and five antique chairs forming part of the Laurence Cadbury collection based at Selly Manor

2.4 Attached burial ground

There is no attached burial ground to the meeting house. However, the 1924 columbarium contains a number of cinerary urns.

2.5 The meeting house in its wider setting

Bournville is located 5.5 miles south west of Birmingham city centre. The area was designated a conservation area in 1971, and forms part of the model village George Cadbury created in the early twentieth century. The meeting house is located on Linden Road, a wide tree lined street which is characterised by a number of cottages built in the Arts and Crafts style, mainly semi-detached and short terraces, each with variations in style. To the south of the meeting house is Bournville Green, with the Grade II listed Rest House, a Grade II listed shopping parade with first floor jetties and timber-framed detailing and the church of St Francis of Assisi also Grade II listed. Opposite the meeting house to the west is the Grade II listed Bournville School of Arts and Crafts, and Bournville Junior School.

The meeting house is set back from the road with a Grade II listed boundary wall which includes timber seating to the south, low hedges surround the property with modern fencing to the rear. The building has a prominent position and views can be seen of the building from various points. The adjacent Bournville Green enhances the suburban character of the area. The car parking facilities are located to the west of the meeting house.

A detached burial ground is located at Lodge Hill Cemetery (NGR SP 02849 82442) which has an area specifically for Quaker burials.

2.6 Listed status

The building is properly listed at Grade II. The list entry makes no mention of the late twentieth century additions, and the internal description of the building is limited.

The boundary wall is also properly listed at Grade II.

2.7 Archaeological potential of the site

The Birmingham Historic Environment Record was consulted and no records have been identified for the site, it is therefore likely to be of low archaeological potential.

Part 3: Current use and management

See completed volunteer survey

3.1 Condition

i) Meeting House: Good. The most recent quinquennial inspection (undertaken in July 2015 by Barnsley Bate, chartered building surveyor) found the building to be in good working order. Recommendations for the next twelve months include re-glazing the kitchen window, and to provide emergency lighting. Since the last quinquennial inspection in 2011 Friends have carried out all the recommended works including replacing a flat roof and insulation of the roof spaces.

ii) Attached burial ground: Not applicable.

3.2 Maintenance

The building is well-maintained by the meeting. Central England Area Meeting issue an 'Annual Inspection of Premises Questionnaire' each year. Maintenance needs are considered following the inspection. The questionnaire is divided into two parts:

1) Maintenance items of a routine or cyclical nature. For example, have the gutters and down pipes been cleaned out regularly?

2) Structural and other defects which may give cause for concern, and actions required or taken as a result of the quinquennial survey. For example, does the roof leak?

The questionnaire completed by Howard Saunders in 2014 recorded that the valleys in the roof, drains and gullies at ground level were currently being checked to ensure they were clear. Overall, there was no record of any problems or issues with the building. The Friends have sufficient funds for the maintenance and repair of the building. Friends have access to CEQ building fund for major projects and short-term loans. Appeals are made to trust funds and members of local meeting for smaller projects. In the past, active fund-raising by local meeting has taken place for a new roof.

3.3 Sustainability

Although the meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit steps have been taken to improve sustainability.

- Climate change and energy efficiency: water is metered, insulation of room spaces in main hall, front cloakrooms, rear hall and front room, energy efficient light bulbs in small hall, emergency lighting upgraded to current recommended specifications, draft proofing to front doors and side door replaced by wider double glazed doors.
- Resource use, recycling and waste management: collection of compost from users and two compost bins located to the rear of the building and container added for waste paper and plastic (taken home by a Friend, no direct collection by local authority).
- Building maintenance & refurbishment: annual inspection and repair of stonework by qualified heritage stonemason. Renewal of stone path and around the side of the building near the George Cadbury bust, using reclaimed stone.
- Wildlife, ecology and nature conservation: the grounds are planted with trees and shrubs which provide wildlife habitats. Woodcraft Folk group (hirer) have added winter accommodation for insects.
- Transport: Addition of bicycle stands planned.

3.4 Amenities

The meeting house has all the amenities it needs. This includes cloakrooms at both ends of the buildings, four bookable rooms (main hall, small hall, children's meeting room and library with folding partition), kitchen and WCs.

An on-site car park is available for twelve cars along with a dropping-off point at the main entrance. Additional parking is available alongside Bournville Green. There is currently no secure parking for bicycles but this is planned for the future. The meeting house is served by a local bus service which runs seven days a week, less frequent on Sundays. Bournville and Selly Oak railway stations are approximately twenty minutes' walk to the meeting house.

3.5 Access

A Disability Access Audit was undertaken during the 1990s. Recommended changes implemented included adaptations to toilets (grab rails and doors widened), opening of new enlarged side doors and the front path elevated to make a slope to allow for the removal of

steps. The meeting house is on one level with no steps, a ramp gives access to the main front doors and the front lobby contains fully accessible toilet facilities. The large and small meeting rooms have a loop system but no facilities for the partially-sighted. The quinquennial survey suggests a ramp to the rear fire exit route and a marked parking space for those with disabilities should be provided adjacent to the front of the premises if possible.

3.6 Community Use

The meeting house is used by Friends for approximately 4 hours a week, with additional hours relating to occasional committee meetings and social events every two to three months. The building is in use for up to 70 hours each week, potentially available for 243 hours (three rooms available 6 and a half days a week between the hours of 9am and 10pm). The small meeting room can accommodate 60 people, the front room 30 people and the large meeting room 200 people. Each room is described as being well lit and heated, power points are available, along with Gopack tables and stacking chairs. There is a letting policy; no young children's parties after experiencing damage to the building previously. All community groups are considered except commercial (selling) and extreme political groups; no bookings of an activity already present, for example one yoga teacher only; needs of adjacent lettings must be considered; when yoga classes are taking place other bookings not accepted if they produce high levels of noise or music. If bookings are for public entertainment then Public Entertainments Licence requirements apply, with a limit of 150 people in the audience. The meeting rooms can be used for free for Quaker activity, public meetings of local interest, and charities supported by the local meeting. Other charities pay a reduced letting fee. The meeting house is popular for lettings due to its peaceful atmosphere and cleanliness of the building.

3.7 Vulnerability to crime

The property has been subject to a couple of break-ins and the bust of George Cadbury has been vandalised in the past. The meeting house is located in an area which is generally well cared for and has low crime levels. The Friends have developed a liaison with the Local Neighbourhood Policing Team.

3.8 Plans for change

Friends wish to install double or secondary glazing where conservation conditions allow in rear rooms and main and small halls.

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 meeting house has already been altered and extended. At present it fulfils the needs of the meeting. Any further alterations would need to be carefully considered, to protect its character.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: The meeting house is already in use by local community groups and has all the facilities to support these.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House: In the unlikely event of the meeting house being laid down the building would lend itself to continue to be used for community use, and the listing would enable change to be managed to protect the building's heritage value.

Part 5: Category: 2

Part 6: List description (s)

Name: **FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE**

List entry Number: 1076294

Location

FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE, LINDEN ROAD B30

District: Birmingham

District Type: Metropolitan Authority

Grade: II

Date first listed: 21-Jan-1970

List entry Description

LINDEN ROAD 1. 5104 Bournville B30 Friends' Meeting House SF 0481 SW 55/3 21.1.70 II GV 2. 1905, by W Alexander Harvey. Red brick with atone dressings; tiled roof. The main hall tall and cabled with an arched doorway of 5 plain orders flanked on either side by a small 2-light mullioned window and, above a tall 2-light mullioned window with 2 transoms. Left and right of this composition the lover subsidiary rooms project diagonally to terminate in gabled facades. In an alcove in the cable end of the right-hand projection the bust of George Cadbury (1839-1922) and a tablet recording the burial there of the ashes of himself and his wife. In the angle on the left an octagonal staircase turret with high pointed cap. Inside, the braces of the hall roof rise from the floor.

Listing NGR: SP0445581402

Name: **WALL AND SEATING IN FRONT OF FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE**

List entry Number: 1219427

Location

WALL AND SEATING IN FRONT OF FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE, LINDEN ROAD B30

District: Birmingham

Grade: II

Date first listed: 08-Jul-1982

List entry Description

LINDEN ROAD 1. 5104 Bournville B30 Wall and seating in front of Friends' Meeting House SF 0481 SW 55/4 II GV 2. Circa 1905 and no doubt by W Alexander Harvey. Stone. Simple wall circa 3ft high punctuated by squat square piers, the wooden seating on scmlly stone supports.

Listing NGR: SP0442881379