

Friends Meeting House, Bridgend

87 Park Street, Bridgend, Glamorganshire, Wales, CF31 4AZ

National Grid Reference: SS 90053 79688



Statement of Significance

The meeting house is a bungalow of the early twentieth century which was acquired in 1967. It has overall low heritage value.

Evidential value

The building is a typical early twentieth-century bungalow. While its original planform is still largely discernible, it is unlikely to provide any unique evidence of the past. It has low evidential value.

Historical value

Built for the local Williams family, the meeting house was acquired in 1967 for the use of a recently-established Quaker meeting. It has medium historical value.

Aesthetic value

The building has several features typical of the early decades of the twentieth century, including a half-timbered gable and pebble-dash render. Notable furnishings include a table and two chairs by the Brynmawr Furniture Company. The building has low aesthetic value.

Communal value

The building has been a Quaker meeting house for nearly fifty years with additional community use. It has high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

1.1 Area Meeting: *South Wales*

1.2 Property Registration Number: *0033510*

1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*

1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Bridgend County Borough Council*

1.5 National heritage body: *Cadw*

1.6 Civil parish: *Bridgend*

1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*

1.8 Cadw ref.: *N/a*

1.9 Conservation Area: *No*

1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*

1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*

1.12 Date(s): *early twentieth century (acquired in 1967)*

1.13 Architect(s): *Not established*

1.14 Date of visit: *28 June 2016*

1.15 Name of report author: *Johanna Roethe*

1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *David Harries, Pete Thompson*

1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *None*

1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*

1.19 Information sources:

Butler, D.M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol. 2, p.850

Local Meeting survey by David Harries, April 2016

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

2.1 Historical background

Bridgend Local Meeting was established in the early 1960s. In 1967, a bungalow known as 'Morlais' was bought for £5,600 and converted to meeting house use for £700. It opened in 1968. It had been previously the house of the Williams family and had been built under the supervision of Rhys Williams (1866-1950), a greengrocer who was also precentor and choirmaster at the local Tabernacle church. According to map evidence, it was built between c.1919 and c.1940; however, oral tradition points towards an earlier date between 1900 and 1914. Rhys's grandson, Owain Williams, was born in the house. Since its acquisition by the Quakers, there have been further alterations and adaptations, including the removal of chimneys (1980s) and the addition of successive conservatories at the rear. In 1999-2000, the former bathroom and two toilets were converted into two toilets (one of which is accessible to wheelchairs). The architect was D. Gareth Lewis.

2.2 The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The meeting house has an oblong plan which is roughly aligned on a north-south axis. The external walls are of Fletton brick rendered with pebble-dash; the hipped roof is covered with modern interlocking tiles. (It was previously tiled with clay tiles inscribed 'Tuileries de Beauvais' of which an example survives.) The main entrance with a Tudor arch is about half-way along the east side, under a half-timbered cross gable. The northeast corner has a diagonally-aligned oblong bay window.

The entrance leads into an L-shaped corridor with panelling and a herringbone woodblock floor. The meeting room at the rear (south) is accessed by 1960s swing doors. This was originally two separate rooms, which are still discernible by the different floors (parquet and floorboards, respectively). Like the corridor, the walls here are panelled. Two chimneybreasts are still *in situ* although the stacks have been removed above roof level. Four

French doors open into the full-width conservatory below which is a half-basement (not inspected). Along the west side of the corridor are the kitchen and the toilets, as well as a narrow stair to the attic (used for storage). At the northwest corner is an office now rented to the Bridgend Carers Centre. At the northeast corner is a room used by a drop-in centre, next to the children's room or quiet room. Most of the internal doors are the original ones, with a distinctive pattern of two horizontal panels above three vertical ones.

2.3 Loose furnishings

The meeting room has a table and two chairs designed by Paul Matt and made by the Brynmawr Furniture Company (fl. 1929-40). (The Company had been established by Quakers to ease unemployment.) An embroidered picture in the meeting room is the work of Kate Williams, the grandmother of Owain Williams, who lived in the building.

2.4 Attached burial ground (if any)

Not applicable

2.5 The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house has a garden to the rear and a small paved car park to the front. The latter has a boundary wall with some fine but dilapidated Art Nouveau railings. The wider area is largely residential.

2.6 Listed status

The meeting house is currently not listed and is not considered to be candidate for listing.

2.7 Archaeological potential of the site

Ordnance Survey maps of before 1919 show a quarry on this site. The site has low archaeological potential.

Part 3: Current use and management

See completed volunteer survey

3.1 Condition

- i) Meeting House: Good
- ii) Attached burial ground (if any): Not applicable

3.2 Maintenance

The last quinquennial inspection took place in November 2014 (no copy of the report was provided). Some of the recommendations have been implemented, including external repairs and the provision of wheelchair access to the garden. There is no five-year maintenance and repair plan. The local meeting has enough money for the maintenance and repair of the building.

3.3 Sustainability

The meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit. It has implemented measures to reduce its environmental impact. These include:

- Climate change & energy efficiency: ceiling insulation
- Resource use, recycling & waste management: use of Council waste and recycling scheme
- Building maintenance & refurbishment: partial double glazing

- Wildlife, ecology and nature conservation: vegetable plot in the garden
- Transport: adjusting the times of the Meeting for Worship to suit bus timetables

The meeting does not have an Energy Performance Certificate but would consider obtaining one.

3.4 Amenities

The meeting has all the amenities it needs. These are all in the meeting house. There is no resident Warden.

The meeting is accessible by public transport although services are limited and there is no bus stop in the vicinity. There is limited parking on site but no secure parking for bicycles.

3.5 Access

The meeting house is accessible to people with disabilities. There is level access, an accessible toilet, a hearing loop and facilities for partially-sighted people. No Disability Access Audit has been conducted but access has been reviewed informally by the local meeting. An external ramp has been installed, as well as an accessible toilet.

3.6 Community Use

Friends use the meeting house for 3-4 hours per week. The building is theoretically available for community lettings for a maximum number of 16 hours per week. It is used for an average of 10 hours per week. One room is let as office to the Bridgend Carers Centre. The meeting uses the Area Meeting's lettings policy which does not permit free use other than for Local Meeting activities. Users value the meeting house for its cheap rates, warmth, quiet, good atmosphere and parking provision.

3.7 Vulnerability to crime

There are no signs of general crime or anti-social behaviour at the site. There has been no heritage crime. One incident of a break-in with glass damage was reported several years ago to the police. The locality is generally well-cared for, has low crime levels, low deprivation and high community confidence. There is currently no liaison with the Local Neighbourhood Policing Team.

3.8 Plans for change

There are no specific plans at the moment but the upkeep of the building is kept under constant review.

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 currently has all the facilities required by the local meeting. There are no heritage constraints on the building and it could be altered and extended as required.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: The use of the meeting house by the Bridgend Carers Centre and community groups currently do not require any changes.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting: Should the meeting be laid down or decide to dispose of the building, it could easily be converted back to residential or continue in a community use. Depending on housing demand in the locality, it could also be replaced by a larger house (subject to planning permission).

Part 5: Category: 4