

Friends Meeting House, Broughton

Meeting House Lane, Little Broughton, Cockermouth, CA13 0YQ

National Grid Reference: NY 07832 31740



Statement of Significance

The modest building has medium significance as an altered example of a plain former meeting house built in 1742, extended and altered in the late nineteenth century. It has an attractive setting on the edge of a village in north-west Cumbria, and is currently used by an evangelical congregation.

Evidential value

The building and site have medium evidential value primarily associated with the potential to yield information about the building's eighteenth century construction from the fabric, and about the earlier meeting house on the site, from below-ground archaeology.

Historical value

The meeting house site has high historic value, associated with a meeting house built here in 1687. The meeting house retains its historic internal layout, with later fittings reflecting a late nineteenth century refurbishment.

Aesthetic value

The meeting house is typical of the local vernacular architecture with characteristic rendered walls and plain stone window surrounds, and has a distinctive position on the edge of the village enclosed by walls. The interior of the meeting room has a plain Victorian character with pine fittings designed for their utility, including the panelled vertically sliding screen.

Communal value

The building is used by a local evangelical Christian community, but is not used by other groups. It has medium community value as a place of worship, with a historical association with Quakers.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Cumberland*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *Not known*
- 1.3 Owner: *Friends Trust*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Allerdale Borough Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *North West*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Broughton*
- 1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*
- 1.8 NHLE: *Not applicable*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *No*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *1742*
- 1.13 Architect (s): *Unknown*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *16 June 2015*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Marion Barter*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *David Day*
- 1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *Detached burial ground - NY 08123190*
- 1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*
- 1.19 Information sources:
D.Butler, *Quaker Meeting Houses in the Lake Counties, 1978, pp52-55*

Quaker Burial Ground, Little Broughton:

<http://www.geog.port.ac.uk/webmap/thelakes/html/lgaz/lk20826.htm>

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

2.1. Historical background

In 1653 George Fox was one of several Quakers who travelled to this remote part of north-west Cumbria to lead meetings, and until 1672 Quakers held meetings for worship outside on Pardshaw Crag, which is less than 5 miles of Broughton. Here, Quakers met in their homes until they needed a meeting house, which was built in Broughton in 1687. The date of 1687 is recorded on a Victorian terracotta panel on the chimney stack. The first building was rebuilt

in 1742, apparently on the same site, as a 4-bay single-storey structure with a smaller women's meeting room to the north-east and the larger meeting room to the south-west. David Butler records that the entrance was at that date from the lane to the north-west. A barn was attached to the east gable-end. At an unknown date in the late 19th century, a single-storey extension was added to the south-east side, to provide a new entrance lobby and a small heated room, probably for a school room. In 1881, the stand at the south-west end was rebuilt with separate benches either side of a central stove, a pattern typical of the area. Around the same time new internal joinery including the pine tongue and groove dado panelling, the moveable screen and the ceiling was installed.

Use of the building for meetings had declined by the second half of the 20th century, and in 1980 Quaker meetings ceased. For a few years from 1977, the building was used jointly by an Evangelical Christian church and the Quakers. The building is still owned by the Area Meeting but is maintained and repaired by the evangelical congregation who fitted a pulpit, installed new windows, suspended ceilings and upgraded the WCs.

The stone barn attached to the east gable end was demolished in c2005, leaving stub walls.

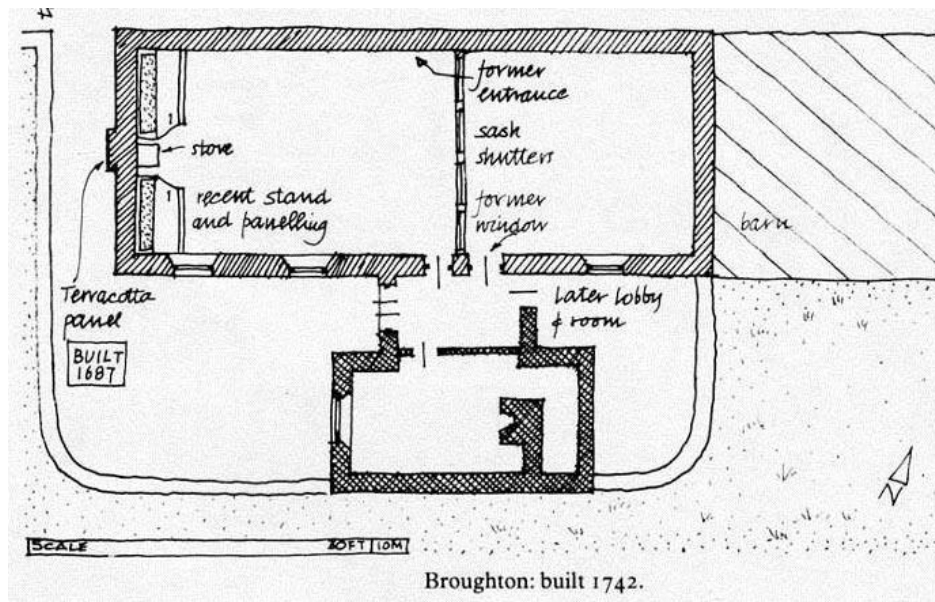


Fig.1: meeting house as reconstructed by David Butler (*Quaker Meeting Houses of the Lake Counties*, 1978, pp. 54)

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The meeting house was built in 1742 and extended to the south for a schoolroom and porch in the late 19th century. It is built of local stone finished in pebble-dash, with ashlar dressings and a Cumbria slate roof with clay ridges. There are two chimney stacks, both rendered, one to the south-west gable end and one to the north corner. The rainwater goods are plastic with some cast-iron. The building is aligned roughly north-west to south-east with the main entrance on the south side via a lobby into the Victorian addition. The entrance into the porch is via double boarded doors, facing south-west. The building is single aspect, with windows only to the south-east side. There are three tall windows all with modern joinery, in place of sash windows; two to the former large meeting room west of the porch

and one to the small meeting room east of the porch. The Victorian addition has a pitched roof aligned parallel to the main building with a short linking porch between the two ranges. There is a tall 2-light mullioned window to the south-west rendered gable end, with modern glass and joinery. The south-east wall is built of uncoursed stone, with a small window in a stone surround.

From the lobby a door leads right into the former schoolroom, now a kitchen with WCs. A pair of twentieth century flush doors lead left (north) into two meetings rooms, the larger meeting room to the west and the former women's meeting room to the east. The timber screen with vertically sliding panelled shutters is in situ between the two meeting rooms, painted white on the north-east side and varnished on the south-west side. The larger meeting room has a late nineteenth century ceiling with two beams, a moulded cornice and a tongue and grooved pine ceiling with decorative cast-iron vents. The walls are lined with pine dado panelling, also late nineteenth century in date. The platform of the stand is in situ but the fixed bench and front panelling are missing. The floor is carpeted and the pine benches appear to be late nineteenth century. The inserted pulpit is modern. The former women's meeting room has a grid suspended ceiling.

2.3. Loose furnishings

The meeting house has late nineteenth pine benches arranged for use by the evangelical congregation, facing the stand.



Fig.2: benches in the meeting room

2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

None

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house stands in a small walled enclosure in the north-west corner of a field known as Flodders Field, on the south side of the village of Broughton. The boundary walls are solidly built of snecked stone and have half-round copings, and are high enough to screen the meeting house from view. Nearby is a pub and eighteenth and nineteenth century terraced cottages and farmsteads. There is a detached burial ground to the north east of the meeting house (at NY 08123190), reached along the lane that runs along the north side of the building, and signposted on the wall outside the meeting house.

2.6. Listed status

Not listed. The building is probably not a candidate for listing due to the extent of internal and external alteration.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

There are no Historic Environment Records for this site, but the site may have some archaeological potential in relation to the earlier meeting house on the site.