

## ***Friends Meeting House, Cartmel***

*Haggs Lane, Cartmel, Grange-Over-Sands, LA11 6HD*

*National Grid Reference: SD 38244 78556*



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

***Cartmel Meeting House has high significance as a good example of an attractive, well-maintained mid-Victorian meeting house, retaining some original fittings and designed by well-regarded architect Alfred Waterhouse. The site also contains an unaltered gig house and stable block and with its green, open setting the building makes a positive contribution to Cartmel conservation area.***

### ***Evidential value***

***The meeting house has relatively low evidential value, as a single-phase building, but the fabric could reveal more about how the building was first designed and constructed. The site is unlikely to have archaeological potential.***

### ***Historical value***

***Quakerism has a long history in this area. The building has high historical significance as a purpose-built meeting house that eventually replaced the late 17<sup>th</sup> century meeting house at Height. The gig house and stables also have high historical value and illustrate Quaker provision for transport to meetings in an age before the motor car.***

### ***Aesthetic value***

***The meeting house has high aesthetic significance as a good example of a Victorian meeting house that retains some original joinery such as the***

***stand, dado panelling and roof structure. Its association with the architect Waterhouse adds to this significance.***

**Communal value**

***The meeting house has communal value as the local focus for Friends since 1859, and as a building that contributes to the conservation area, but it is not well used by the community outside the Friends. It has medium communal value overall.***

**Part 1: Core data**

1.1 Area Meeting: *Swarthmoor (SW Cumbria)*

1.2 Property Registration Number: *0025430*

1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*

1.4 Local Planning Authority: *South Lakeland District Council*

1.5 Civil parish: *Lower Allithwaite*

1.6 Historic England locality: *North West*

1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*

1.8 NHLE: *N/A*

1.9 Conservation Area: *Cartmel*

1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*

1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*

1.12 Date(s): *1859*

1.13 Architect (s): *Alfred Waterhouse*

1.14 Date of visit: *9 June 2015*

1.15 Name of report author: *Marion Barter*

1.16 Name of contact made on site: *Cindy Metcalfe*

1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *gig house and stable on same site, adjoining pair of cottages. Detached burial ground at Height.*

1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*

1.19 Information sources:

David M. Butler, *Quaker Meeting Houses of the Lake Counties* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1978), pp. 135-36.

David M. Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1999), vol. 1, pp. 296-297.

Larry Walters, *Cartmel Quaker Meeting – Our First 150 Years*, 2009

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

### 2.1. Historical background

Cartmel is within what is known as '1652 Country'; George Fox visited Cartmel in 1652 to speak in the Priory; the Rev. Philip Bennet declined to debate with him and Fox was knocked down in the churchyard by parishioners (Walters page 4). In 1677 a meeting house for Friends was built in a remote rural area north of High Newton at Cartmel Height; the land was given and funded by Lawrence Newton whose initials are inscribed over the door (Butler p131). A burial ground was laid out nearby. The Height meeting declined from about 1840, and the meeting house was sold in 1922; it is now a private house.

During the mid-nineteenth century, Friends decided to establish a meeting in the more accessible village of Cartmel; in 1858 two cottages and the adjoining site on Hagg Lane were bought for £175, and a new meeting house building was built by November 1859. The architect was Alfred Waterhouse, whose fees were paid for by 'a Manchester Friend'. The contractor was James Carruthers of Barrow, and the construction costs were just over £482 (Walters pp15-16). The Friends who led the project to build the meeting house included William Nash and Joseph Binyon, both farmers who moved into the area. For some years, meetings for worship alternated between Height and Cartmel, before the former closed. Twentieth century improvements included water and drainage being installed in 1956 for an indoor WC, and in 1959 electric heating was installed to replace the stove (Fig.1). In 1968, alterations were made to adapt the stepped loft for a classroom and a suspended ceiling was inserted in the meeting room. The roof was re-laid as part of the refurbishment works.

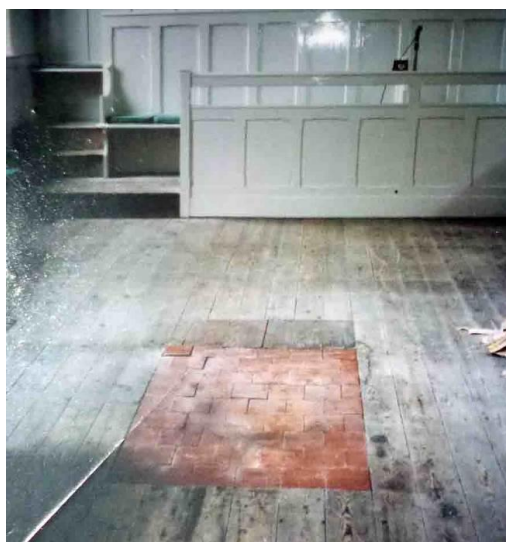


Fig.1: brick hearth in centre of floor for earlier stove (2009, Meeting House archive)



Fig.2: photo of preparative meeting, 1971 (Meeting House archive)

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

The meeting house was built in 1859, designed by Alfred Waterhouse. It is built of stone finished in rough-cast render, with limestone dressings, a graduated Cumbrian slate roof and cast-iron rainwater goods. The T-plan building has a gabled porch into the east bay of the building, leading into a lobby with stairs to the former gallery above, and kitchen and WCs beyond. The meeting room occupies three bays on the west, single-storey side of the building.

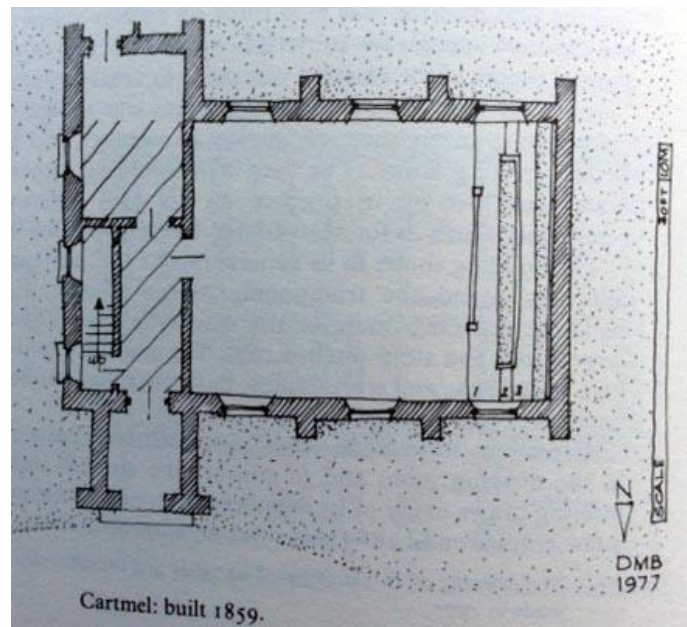


Fig.3: Ground floor plan of the meeting house as reconstructed by Butler (north at the bottom; not to scale) (Butler (1978), p.136)

The open gabled porch has flanking buttresses and a semi-circular arched outer doorway, with a recessed stone panel above carved with the date 1859. There are two cast-iron boot scrapers outside. The north and south walls have stepped buttresses defining the bays, with three tall segmental-headed windows lighting the meeting

room, each with hopper vents to the top of the window. The right return to the west gable-end is blind. The left return has one tall arched window to the first floor and three small fixed windows to the ground floor windows, all with frosted glass. To the rear is a small lean-to outrigger containing a WC and small children's room.

Inside, the porch has a stone floor and an inner 6-panelled door with segmental head. The lobby has a diagonally-laid red and black tiled floor, 4-panelled doors leading to adjoining rooms and fitted cupboards and shelving, all contemporary with the building. The ceiling to the lobby and the kitchen is stepped, for the gallery floor above. The meeting room is a lofty well-lit space with plastered walls and a suspended ceiling. The ministers' stand against the west wall retains two levels of fitted benches, with panelled backs and shaped arm rests. The walls have a panelled dado; all the panels to this, the stand and the doors are simply chamfered and stopped, typical of mid-Victorian joinery. The pine floor is carpeted. The gallery at the east end was blocked off in the mid twentieth century by inserting a full-height partition; prior to this the whole roof was open. The feet of the arched braces to the trusses are visible below the suspended ceiling, and chamfered purlins are visible in the gallery. The plain pine staircase to the gallery is enclosed by partitioning and has no balustrade; the plaster walls here and in the lobby are lined to resemble ashlar.

### 2.3. Loose furnishings

The meeting room and porch have pine benches with railed backs and shaped arms, probably contemporary with the meeting house and possibly designed by Waterhouse. There is also an oak chest used for documents and oak gate leg table with barley-twist legs. Modern chairs are arranged in a circle in the meeting room.



Fig.4: oak document chest in the meeting house, late seventeenth century.

### 2.4. Attached burial ground

None

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

The meeting house is situated on the south-east edge of the attractive village of Cartmel, with a field to the south and a pair of semi-detached cottages that belong to the meeting to the immediate east. The cottages are in poor condition. Behind the garden of the cottages and in the south-east corner of the meeting house grounds is a single-storey L-plan stone-built gig house and stables, built at the same time as the meeting house, in 1859. This has unaltered stalls for three horses with pine boarded

partitions, cobbled floor, lime-washed walls and a pine roof structure. There is a WC at the east end of the stables (formerly an earth closet), and the gig house is an open shed on the south side. The grounds are bounded by limestone walls with two pairs of stone gate piers to the front, with modern steel gates. The site is mainly lawned, with one yew and one mature oak tree and a gravelled drive and car park to the front. The detached burial is at Height, over six miles to the north at grid reference SD 407 847; there is a plan of the burials in the meeting house archive.



Fig.5: gig house and stables in south-corner of the grounds

## 2.6. Listed status

The building is not listed, but may meet the criteria for national designation as Alfred Waterhouse is a Victorian architect of national renown and although the building is relatively plain it retains some original features such as the ministers' stand, dado panelling, doors and windows. The gig house and stable may also be listable as part of the group.

## 2.7. Archaeological potential

The site is not known to have any archaeological potential, as it was built on a vacant site outside the core of medieval Cartmel. The meeting house has an entry on the Cumbria Historic Environment Record (HER Number 43251). Building recording would probably be recommended if the buildings were to be converted or demolished.

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

*See completed volunteer survey*

### 3.1. Condition

i) Meeting House: Good. The last QI was completed by Capita Symonds in 2008 (Ken Humphreys, a conservation architect wrote the report). The only issue is some possible subsidence on the west side, related to a drain, which is under investigation.

ii) Attached burial ground; *n/a*

### 3.2. Maintenance

The building is well-maintained by the meeting, but they do not have a 5-year plan. It is considered to be barely viable as a meeting house. The external re-decoration is now due. Grounds are maintained by regular mowing of the grass.

### 3.3. Sustainability

The meeting does not currently use the Sustainability Toolkit, but it has been used by the meeting in the past. The meeting recycles waste but has not implemented other measures. The windows are probably the originals and are single-glazed, and the building does not have adequate insulation.

### 3.4. Amenities

The meeting has the facilities it needs in the meeting house, including a kitchen re-fitted in 2010, and men's and women's WCs. The meeting house is heated by low electric wall heaters installed in 2006. There is ample parking for cars at the front, and secure space for bicycles in the big house/stable.

### 3.5. Access

The ground floor of the meeting house is level within, but there are two shallow steps to the porch. A temporary ramp can be used to overcome this, and there are handrails in the porch (installed in 2012). Parking close to the entrance is available for disabled people, but the WC is suitable for ambulant disabled people only. There is a hearing loop in the building, but no specific changes have been made for people with sight impairments. There is a bus stop outside the meeting house, but services on Sundays are limited.

### 3.6. Community Use

The building is available for 40 hours a week, but as there is a good choice of local rooms for hire, the meeting house is not regularly let at present. The meeting room is available to let at £10 per hour, and the meeting decides on lettings as requests are made. It would be an attractive venue due to its location, size, quietness, parking, catering facilities, and that it is well priced, and warm.

### 3.7. Vulnerability to Crime

There has been no heritage crime, but a break-in occurred in 2005 which was reported to police. The area is considered to be generally well cared-for, with low levels of crime and deprivation.

### 3.8. Plans for change

The meeting is concerned that maintaining the building is no longer viable and they may need to sell it. There are plans to demolish the cottages, which are currently not habitable, and rebuild on the same site for social housing.

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

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

- i) *As a Meeting House only:* The building meets the needs of the small meeting and could be adapted if required.

*ii) For wider community use, additional to local Meeting use:* There seems to be no demand to use the building for community use, but it has the basic facilities for this and could be further adapted if required.

*iii) As a consequence of being laid down as a Meeting House and passing into secular use:* There is a real possibility that this historic meeting house could close. It would be prudent for it to be assessed against national designation criteria by Historic England at an early stage, to avoid the risk of listing part way through the re-development process. The building and the gig house and stables should be retained if possible, and adapted sympathetically for a new use.

**Part 5: Category: 2**