

## ***Friends Meeting House, Cheadle Hulme***

*91 Station Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, SK8 7BG*

*National Grid Reference: SJ 87831 86298*



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

***The meeting house has medium heritage significance as a Victorian domestic building which was converted for use as a meeting house in the 1950s.***

#### ***Evidential value***

***The meeting house has an overall low level of significance for evidential value. The Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record has not identified the site for any archaeological interest.***

#### ***Historical value***

***Little is known about the builders or architect of 91 Station Road but some research has been undertaken of the occupiers of the building. As a typical Victorian villa which was purchased in the 1950s and converted for meeting house use, it has medium historical value.***

#### ***Aesthetic value***

***The meeting house has a high aesthetic value. It is an attractive late Victorian building which retains much of its original external architectural detail, compromised slightly by the extensions. It makes a positive contribution to the street scene.***

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

***The building is in use as a Quaker meeting house and for community groups.  
The meeting house has a medium communal value.***

**Part 1: Core data**

1.1 Area Meeting: *East Cheshire*

1.2 Property Registration Number: *0005850*

1.3 Owner: *Friends Trust*

1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council*

1.5 Historic England locality: *North West*

1.6 Civil parish: *Cheadle*

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): *Late nineteenth century*

1.13 Architect (s): *Not established*

1.14 Date of visit: *28<sup>th</sup> April 2015*

1.15 Name of report author: *Emma Neil*

1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Evelyn Ingram and Judy Harman*

1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *Not applicable*

1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*

1.19 Information sources:

David M. Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1999), vol. 1, pp. 45.

Lewis, Ann. *Quakers in Cheadle Hulme*, 1988.

Evelyn Ingram, *Local Meeting Survey*, March 2015

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

2.1. Historical background

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Friends who lived in the tiny rural hamlets of Cheadle Hulme and Bramhall met in each other's homes or with Stockport Friends to worship. It was not until the early twentieth century that the number of Quakers living in Cheadle Hulme was sufficient to prompt a new Meeting to be formed. The first Meeting was held in a Friend's house at the end of 1934 or early 1935. Meetings were held at various venues but from 1937 Meetings were held in the King's Hall, and for the next eighteen years.

In 1943 Friends made the decision to set up a building fund to allow them to purchase or build their own meeting house. Friends offered the Meeting a plot of land at Hylton Drive for a new meeting house however planning permission was refused. In 1955, a Victorian house came up for sale in Station Road (Fig.1) and soon after Friends purchased the property for £1,350. Early work involved the removal of a dividing wall on the ground floor to allow for a larger meeting room space.



Figure 1: Sketch of the meetin house prior to front extension by Ann Rodrigues (Lewis, 1988)

The council introduced a road-widening scheme in 1966 which resulted in a Compulsory Purchase Order being served on land in front of the meeting house. The Friends were given £1000 in compensation. This along with other funding was used to renovate the first floor to make a self-contained warden's flat, provide a new cloak room at ground floor and for redecoration of the meeting house in 1969.

In 1971, the meeting room was fully refurbished; with new carpeting, furniture, curtains and interior decoration. In 1974, a single-storey flat roofed extension was built by local builder John Blower to accommodate a kitchen. As part of these works a beautifully Victorian bricked line well was revealed and is now covered over by the kitchen floor. A ramp was installed to the back door of the kitchen allowing wheelchair access.

Major repairs were undertaken to the meeting house in 1986 following a structural survey which revealed works immediately needed to the roof, chimney and external walls which cost approximately £15,000.

In 1999, the architect Neil Collins designed a replacement toilet block and a new entrance and foyer to the front of the property.

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

The meeting house occupies a former detached house, built in the late nineteenth century. The three-storey house has a basement and is built of red brick laid in a Flemish bond with red terracotta detailing, and a Welsh slate roof with two chimney stacks. The west front elevation has a projecting gabled wing to the right, with a quarter hipped roof and ground floor canted bay window and a 2-light segmental pointed window to first floor. The entrance to the left is in a 1999 lean-to porch with steps to the doorway and two single-light pointed

windows with artificial stone sills. Above is a gabled dormer with 2-light window and to the left a smaller window with pointed head. The north gable-end has a single attic window and three small windows at ground. The south gable-end has a single-light window on three levels. The rear of the property to the east has single-storey extensions added in 1974 and 1999.

The main meeting room, smaller meeting rooms and ancillary facilities are accessed via a pleasant light and spacious lobby leading into a narrow corridor, with some geometric tile detailing to the floor.

The main meeting room is rectangular in shape and is light and spacious. The room has plastered walls and ceiling, the floor is carpeted and the room is well-lit by windows to the east, south and west walls.

The meeting house also contains a committee room, toilet and kitchen facilities.

### 2.3. Loose furnishings

No furnishings of any particular note; the meeting uses modern chairs.

### 2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

Not applicable.

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

The meeting house is located in Cheadle Hulme, a suburb of south-west Stockport. It is set back from the street on the corner of Station Road and Ramillies Avenue. The red brick low boundary wall and surrounding garden create an attractive enclosed green space along with a triangular plot of land to the north which makes a positive contribution to the surrounding area. The grounds are well planted with trees and shrubs which add to the mature landscaped character of the area. To the north-east of the meeting house the area is predominantly residential, the housing is generally a mix of late Victorian and 1930s semi-detached houses set back from the road with front gardens. To the north is Cheadle Hulme Methodist Church and to the south-east mid to late twentieth century housing. The key view of the meeting house is from Station Road.

### 2.6. Listed status

Not listed. As an altered example of a modest Victorian house, this is not considered to be a candidate for listing.

### 2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

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

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

*See completed volunteer survey*

### 3.1. Condition

i) Meeting House: Good. The most recent quinquennial inspection (undertaken in 2013 by Meller Braggins) found the building had been adequately maintained to a good standard for its age and type.

ii) Attached burial ground (if any): *Not applicable*

### 3.2. Maintenance

The meeting house does not have a five-year maintenance and repair plan. Members monitor the meeting house on an annual basis and undertake the works recommended in the quinquennial survey. The Friends have the necessary funds to undertake repairs and maintenance when needed.

### 3.3. Sustainability

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

- Climate change and energy efficiency: the building has been insulated where possible, appliances are regularly serviced and the heating settings are controlled.
- Resource use, recycling and waste management: the meeting house uses the local authority recycling scheme.
- Building maintenance and refurbishment: Friends undertake annual inspections and quinquennial surveys are commissioned. Repairs are undertaken as required.
- Wildlife, ecology and conservation: the grounds are well planted with trees and shrubs which provide wildlife habitats.
- Transport: Friends car-share where possible.

### 3.4. Amenities

The meeting house has all the amenities it needs. These include a kitchen area, WCs (including one fully accessible), a meeting room and committee room.

### 3.5. Access

A Disability Access Audit was undertaken in 1999. Recommendations included doors to be widened, light switches lowered and disabled toilet. These items were actioned by the Friends promptly in 1999 as part of the extensions that were being built at the time.

The meeting house has ramped access to the side entrance via the kitchen and then level access throughout, a fully accessible WC and hearing loop are available. There is no first floor disabled access.

The meeting is accessible by public transport. A regular bus service serves the area and the railway station is a five minute walk away. On-site car parking is not available but further car parking available on nearby streets.

### 3.6 Community Use

The meeting house is used by Friends for approximately 3 hours and in community use for 15 hours each week. The Meeting does have a lettings policy. No smoking or alcoholic drinking is permitted. Political parties are not allowed to use the meeting house nor those whose principles or practices are not in sympathy with Friends. The rooms are let solely to charities.

### 3.7. Vulnerability to crime

The area has low crime levels and there has been no heritage crime reported at the site.

### 3.8. Plans for change

No future plans for change.

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

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

*Summary addressing scenarios below:*

*i) As a Meeting House used only by the local Meeting:* Scope for any extensions are limited due to the tight boundary of the site. However, the interior could be altered further, but Friends seem to have all the amenities they need.

*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.

*ii) Being laid down as a Meeting House:* The upper floors have been in use as a flat previously and there would be scope to convert the ground floor into a flat or return the whole property to residential use (subject to planning permission).

## **Part 5: Category: 3**