

## ***Friends Meeting House, Clevedon***

*15 Albert Road, Clevedon, Somerset, BS21 7RP*

*National Grid Reference: ST 40518 71488*



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

***The meeting house is an Italianate building of local stone, built in 1868 to the designs of Hans Price of Weston super Mare on land purchased from the Elton family. The main meeting room retains its original stand and something of its original character. The building is not listed and is of medium heritage significance.***

### ***Evidential value***

***There is small likelihood of archaeological remains below the building which is of low evidential value.***

### ***Historical value***

***The meeting house was built as part of the mid-nineteenth-century development of Clevedon as a seaside resort by the Elton family of nearby Clevedon Court. The architect, Hans Price, designed a number of other private and civic buildings in Clevedon and Weston super Mare. The building has medium historical value.***

### ***Aesthetic value***

***The building is a modest example of the Italianate style which was popular in the mid-nineteenth century, with a boldly-detailed porch. The interior rooms still retain something of their original character and the building is of medium aesthetic value.***

### **Communal value**

***The meeting house has been used by Quakers since 1868 and is also well-used by the wider community. It is of high communal value.***

### **Part 1: Core data**

1.1 Area Meeting: *North Somerset*

1.2 Property Registration Number: *0015850*

1.3 Owner: *North Somerset Area Meeting*

1.4 Local Planning Authority: *North Somerset Council*

1.5 Historic England locality: *South West*

1.6 Civil parish: *Clevedon*

1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*

1.8 NHLE: *N/a*

1.9 Conservation Area: *No*

1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*

1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*

1.12 Date(s): *1868*

1.13 Architect(s): *Hans F. Price of Weston super Mare*

1.14 Date of visit: *2 September 2016*

1.15 Name of report author: *Neil Burton*

1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Adrian Shephard, Liz Billingham, Ingrid Reinbach and Gaynor Targett*

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. 535

*The Friend* 1868, p. 213

Local Meeting archives

Local Meeting survey by Tim Bond and Peter Brooks, April 2016

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

#### **2.1 Historical background**

The Elton family of Clevedon Court began developing their estate at Clevedon in the 1820s with superior villas and lodging houses, which were bought or rented by Bristol merchants. The arrival of the railway in 1847 accelerated the growth of the town. In 1867 Friends leased a site in Albert Road in the upper part of the town for building a new meeting house. Sir

Arthur Elton compelled the Quakers to employ an architect to design the new building and also imposed a condition that the property could not subsequently be let or sold to any religious denomination other than the Church of England.

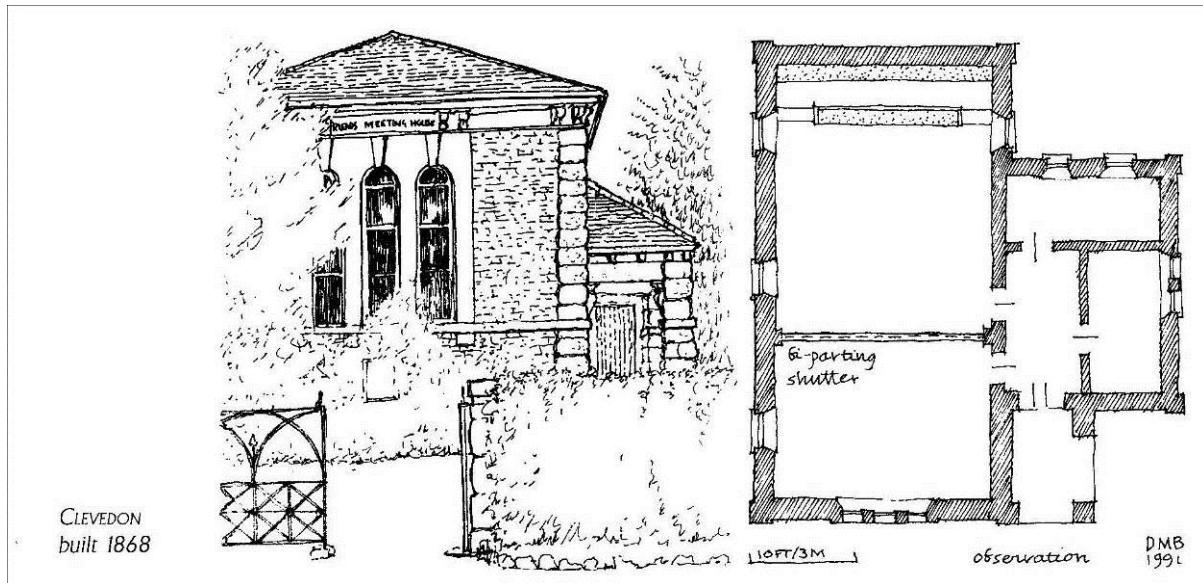


Figure 1: ground plan and perspective view of main front  
North is to the left of the plan. (Butler, vol. 2, p. 535)

## 2.2 The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The meeting house is designed in the Italianate style and built of squared grey Pennant sandstone rubble with a plinth and quoins of cream sandstone, cornice and window dressings of Bath stone and roof coverings of natural slate. The main building is rectangular on plan with a hipped roof. On the south side is a lower extension with a lean-to roof containing the ancillary spaces and in front of it at the south west angle is an open porch.

The west front facing the road has triple round-headed windows with quoins in a stone surround. Above them is a stone cornice with paired modillions. Over the windows is the inscription QUAKER MEETING HOUSE. To the right of the front is the south west porch on bold tapering rock-faced piers and with the date 1868 over the west entrance. Behind the porch filling the centre of the south side is a lower extension with a paired window in the south side and two small windows on the east side. The north side of the building has three tall rounded-headed windows. The east end is blind.

Internally, the main block contains two rooms; the larger to the east. This has a dado of unpainted match-boarding and a minister's stand across the full width of the east end with a heavy moulded handrail. The room has moulded plaster cornice and a flat ceiling with a circular ventilator. The building was originally heated by two stoves but their location is unclear. There was originally a 'rising and falling shutter' across the full width of the west wall, enabling the larger and smaller rooms to be linked. The shutter has now been removed or encased. The smaller room has a modern suspended ceiling and a match-boarded dado, now painted.

## 2.3 Loose furnishings

There are several timber benches with open rail backs in the two main rooms, which may be original to the building.

## 2.4 Attached burial ground (if any)

None

## 2.5 The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house stands in a small plot with a tarmac forecourt and a small garden at the rear, all enclosed by a stone wall. The building fronts onto a serpentine residential road, lined with large mid-Victorian villas, many now converted into flats.

## 2.6 Listed status

Hans Price also designed Clevedon Pier (Grade I) and several other buildings by him in Clevedon and Weston are listed Grade II, but the Quaker Meeting House is probably too altered to qualify for statutory listing. It should certainly be included in any local list if the local council maintains one. It is slightly surprising that the area, with large Victorian villas fronting winding well-treed roads, is not designated as a conservation area.

## 2.7 Archaeological potential of the site

There is no evidence of previous settlement or development of the site which is of 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): N/A

### 3.2 Maintenance

The last Quinquennial Inspection was made in February 2016 by Jonathan Miles FRICS. The building was found to be well-maintained with no major structural problems. Significant repairs and redecoration of the windows and other woodwork were both carried out after the 2010 inspection. There is a 5-year maintenance and repair plan based on the QI categories. The meeting has enough money for maintenance and minor repairs but not for some desirables.

### 3.3 Sustainability

The meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit but follows those measures which the meeting feels all responsible members of the Society should follow and has implemented several measures to reduce its environmental impact. These include:

- Climate change & energy efficiency: change to Good Energy as the gas and electricity supplier.
- Resource use, recycling & waste management: try to limit resource use and recycle via the council system.
- Wildlife and nature conservation: composting of garden materials.
- Transport: lift-sharing encouraged.

The meeting does not have an Energy Performance Certificate and would not consider obtaining one because the money could be better spent.

### 3.4 Amenities

The meeting has all the amenities it needs within the meeting house. These include a large and a small meeting room, a small kitchen, recently modernised, one women's toilet and one unisex accessible toilet. There is no resident warden. Public bus transport is good to Bristol and Weston, but poor to other areas and buses are limited on Sundays. There is no direct train to Clevedon. There is limited parking on-site for one or two cars. Parking is possible in nearby streets. There is no secure storage for bicycles.

### 3.5 Access

The meeting house is accessible to people with disabilities and all rooms are on one floor, but wheelchairs must use a rear door. There is an accessible toilet and a hearing loop but no special facilities for partially-sighted people. The meeting has not conducted a Disability Access Audit, but relies on the recommendations in the QI.

### 3.6 Community Use

Friends use the meeting house for 3-4 hours per week. The building is available for community lettings for a maximum number of 60 hours per week and is used for an average of about 24 hours per week (the building is let as a whole). The meeting has a lettings policy on the website. No overtly racist or discriminatory groups are allowed. Free use is allowed to the local authority for supervised access meetings between parents and children and family group conferences. All cases for free use require approval by the local business meeting. Users value the building for its amenities and friendly informal or homely atmosphere.

### 3.7 Vulnerability to crime

There has been no general crime or heritage crime. Anti-social behaviour is restricted to the occasional rough sleeper and one persistent beggar. A small theft in the 1990s was reported to the police. The locality is generally well-cared for, has low crime levels, low levels of deprivation and high community confidence. There is no established liaison with the Local Neighbourhood Policing Team because it is not required.

### 3.8 Plans for change

The smaller meeting room requires refurbishment, but this is not a high priority.

## **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 all the facilities it currently needs within the building. It is a small building but there is probably some limited scope for change, if required subject to planning constraints.

*ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use:* As above, there is probably some limited scope for change.

*iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House:* the buildings could doubtless serve a wholly secular use if closed.

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