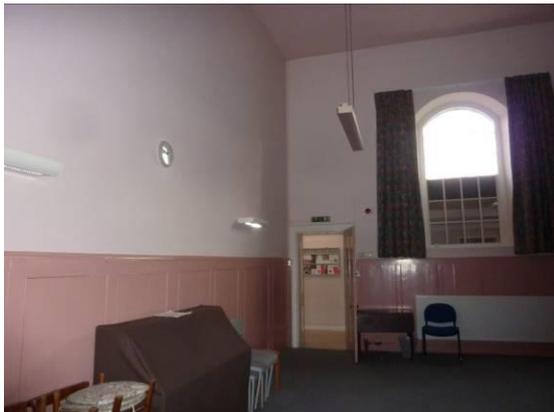


Friends Meeting House, Derby

St Helen's Street, Derby, DE1 3GY

National Grid Reference: SK 34958 36696



Statement of Significance

The meeting house is a good example dating from the very early nineteenth century by a builder/architect who designed meeting houses elsewhere in the country. Elements of the original plan form survive.

Evidential value

The building is evidence for the resources of the Quakers in Derby and it exhibits successive alterations reflecting the changing needs and circumstances of the meeting. There is medium evidential value.

Historical value

The meeting house is a good example of a building which reflects traditional plan form combined with typical early nineteenth century elevational treatment. It is also significant for the association with the builder who designed meeting houses elsewhere. There is high historic value.

Aesthetic value

The front elevation of the building and its setting within a walled area is attractive and typical of the periods represented. There is medium aesthetic value.

Communal value

The building is available for use by local community groups and there is medium communal value.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Nottingham and Derbyshire*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *15820*
- 1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Derby City Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *East Midlands*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Derby*
- 1.7 Listed status: *II*
- 1.8 NHLE: *1279318*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *No*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *1808*
- 1.13 Architect (s): *John Bevans*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *23 November 2015*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Clare Hartwell*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Gwen Schaffer*
- 1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *None*
- 1.18 Attached burial ground: *Yes*
- 1.19 Information sources:

Stell, C., *Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting-houses Derbyshire (RCHME 1986)*, p. 45-6

Butler, D. M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1999), Vol. 1 p. 126-7

Colvin, H. *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840* (Yale University Press, London and New Haven, 4th ed. 2008) p. 123

Hartwell, C., Pevsner, N. & Williamson, E, *The Buildings of England Derbyshire* (Yale University Press, London and New Haven, 2016).

Schaffer, G., Volunteer Form, March 2016

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

2.1. Historical background

George Fox visited Derby in 1650 and was imprisoned there for blasphemy. There are no records of a meeting in Derby itself until 1799 when a room was fitted up at a pub known as the Bell Inn. This was probably the inn now known as the Old Bell Hotel on Sadler Gate, a building with seventeenth century origins. Soon after this the meeting transferred to a room in a former silk mill on Iron Gate, which was registered in 1800. A site for a purpose-built meeting house was acquired in 1804 and plans were prepared by John Bevan or Bevans, a Quaker builder and surveyor from Plaistow in Essex. Bevans designed a number of meeting houses for the Society, including one in London and one in York. According to some sources the building was paid for by subscription. It is dated 1808 and was registered in 1810, when it was described as 'lately erected'. A porch was added in 1855 using matching materials. This structure incorporated a WC, but it is not certain that this was the original arrangement, and the facility has been removed. The wall dividing the two rooms formerly had folding shutters; it was replaced in brick at unknown date during the twentieth century. The attached plot including the burial ground was acquired through compulsory purchase for the Derby inner city ring road. This had been proposed under an Improvement Plan of 1932 but it did not begin until 1967. It was built incrementally and completed with Lara Croft Way in 2010. It appears that the walling materials were retained for rebuilding the perimeter wall on a new line to enclose the meeting house plot, which represented a very reduced area. An extension was erected to the meeting house in 1972 providing kitchen, WCs and a small meeting room. A plaque on the former porch at the front of the building was put up by the Derby Rotary Society and is dated 1981. It gives brief details of the building and of Quakers in Derby. In 1991 the interior space was rearranged and the WC was adapted for disabled use.



Figure 1. The rear of the building showing the ramp and the surviving fragment of the burial ground

Repairs took place in 2001-2 when the roof of the older part of the building was refurbished, insulation was installed and thermal curtains fitted. The work was undertaken by Blair Gratton Architects. A major refurbishment of the extension took place in 2004-6 when the ramp was added, new windows were put in and other works undertaken. This work was undertaken by Anthony Short & Partners.

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

Meeting house dated 1808 by John Bevans built of regularly coursed ashlar blocks with slated hipped roof and moulded and coved stone eaves. Single storeyed, of rectangular plan, with a single storey rear extension of 1972. The entrance side to the road is symmetrical with four tall multi-paned windows in arched openings and a central stone plaque with the date. A centrally placed single-storey porch with a hipped roof is an addition of 1855. Stone archways are attached on each side of the building giving access to the rear (east side) and to a porch addition of 1972 (west side). These appear to be original or later nineteenth century features. The sides of the building are simply treated without openings. The lower part of the rear of the building is obscured by the 1972 extension, with the heads of three arched windows above, one to the west lighting the former smaller meeting room, and two lighting the large room. The porch has been converted to a reading room and the present entrance is in the extension, which provides circulation and service accommodation. The two meeting rooms are large single-volume spaces with largely modern finishes and a twentieth century dividing wall, although dado panelling, probably of nineteenth century date, survives in the larger room.

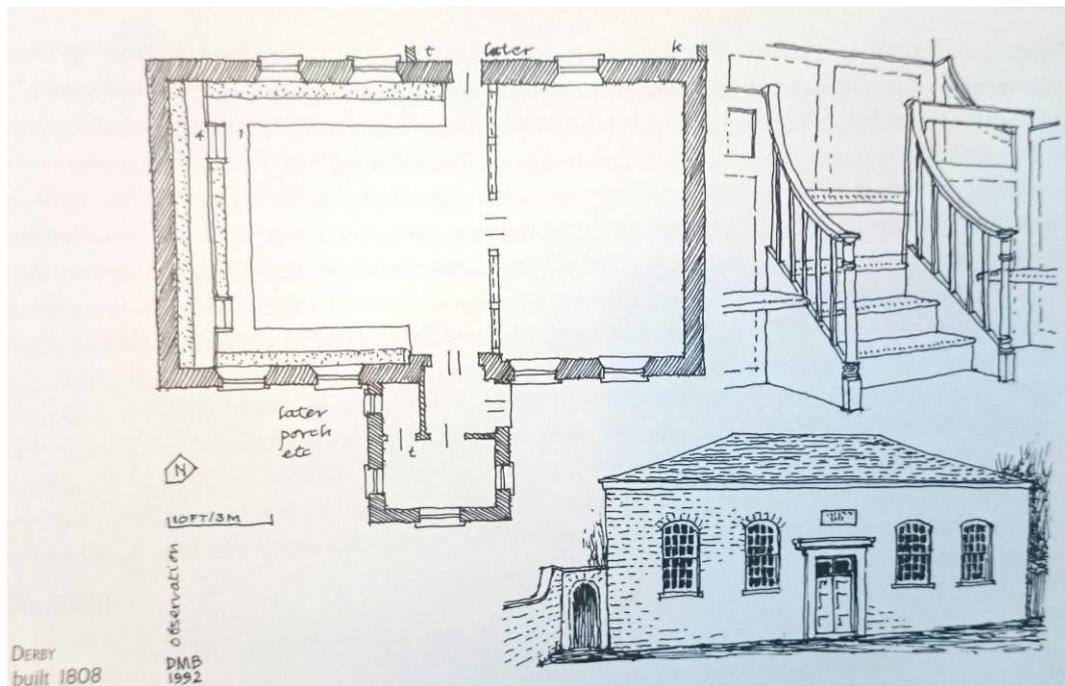


Figure 2. The original layout and elevation based on a survey of 1959 (Butler)

The plan and elevations of the building are of interest because a traditional plan form, with a through passage separating a smaller from a larger room was used and is reflected in the rear fenestration, however the front towards the street is treated as a symmetrical composition, reflecting standard architectural conventions current from the eighteenth century.

2.3. Loose furnishings

There are two benches which are probably of nineteenth century date.

2.4. Attached burial ground.

This survives in very reduced form, following the construction of the ring road. The interments and headstones were removed when the road was built. It remains in occasional use.

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house stands to the north-west side of the centre of Derby, to the north of and immediately beside the ring road. It is in a mixed area with offices, commercial and former industrial buildings. The area is currently (2015) being developed, and offices and blocks of flats are being constructed or formed from existing buildings in the immediate neighbourhood.



Figure 3. The meeting house (centre) and its setting

2.6. Listed status

The building is appropriately listed grade II.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

No archaeological potential has been identified, however it is thought to be on or near the site of a medieval monastery or priory, hence with possible archaeological deposits on or near the site.

Part 3: Current use and management

See completed volunteer survey

3.1. Condition

- i) Meeting House: Good
- ii) Attached burial ground: optimal/generally satisfactory

3.2. Maintenance

The most recent QI was completed in January 2016. Problems with discharge of rainwater were identified and gutters required cleaning, however the building was not suffering from damp. Ribbon pointing was identified as a potential source of dampness and problems affecting the stonework; repointing was recommended and localised masonry defects requiring repair identified. Work undertaken includes boiler replacement, and the checking of fire alarm system and electrical system has been organised. Stolen lead replacement has been undertaken. There is an outstanding need to inspect roof voids.

3.3. Sustainability

The following measures have been taken:

- Installation of solar panels on the roof
- Installation of thermal curtains
- Maintenance of the burial ground as a green open space with some composting
- Audit of travel arrangements to the meeting

3.4. Amenities

There is a large kitchen, WCs and additional meeting space in the extension. There are problems with parking and the meeting has been unable to purchase land to provide it.

3.5. Access

Level access is available via a ramp serving the extension, and floors are level inside. There is a fully accessible WC and hearing loop. There is no on-site parking and restrictions on parking outside the building.

3.6. Community Use

The rooms are available to hire by community, voluntary and educational organisations, for a wide range of purposes. The building is currently used in this way for about fifteen hours per week. Commercial use, ticketed events, parties or receptions are not permitted.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

Although the area is not particularly susceptible to crime and anti-social behaviour, lead from the roof has been stolen twice in recent years, most recently in 2013. There have also been issues of trespass in the grounds.

3.8. Plans for change

There are plans to change the entry system to the building.

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: The needs of the meeting appear to be satisfied by the current arrangements, however there is scope for change to the extension if required.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: Changes to the extension would be possible if required.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House: The building would be difficult to adapt for uses other than community uses, and there would be heritage constraints to altering the original fabric.

Part 5: Category: 2

Part 6: List descriptions

Name: FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE

List entry Number: 1279318

FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, ST HELENS STREET

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

District: City of Derby

District Type: Unitary Authority

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 24-Feb-1977

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

List entry Description

ST HELEN'S STREET 1. 5170 Friends Meeting House SK 3436 NE 3/238 II

2. Dated 1808. Small plain stone rectangular building; single-storeyed; added porch with fabled slate roof and another modern porch at rear on right-hand side; coved stone eaves; slates. Stone tablet engraved with above date.

Listing NGR: SK3495836692