

Quaker Meeting House, Ealing

17 Woodville Road, London, W5 2SE

National Grid Reference: TQ 17970 81313



Statement of Significance

A modest design of the 1950s, well-detailed and little-altered, and making a minor positive contribution to the local conservation area. Overall of medium significance.

Evidential value

The building is of post-war date, but expresses well its purpose and function. It is of medium evidential value.

Historical value

The building was built in 1954 from designs by the well-known Quaker architect Hubert Lidbetter. It is on the site of an earlier house. It is of medium historical value.

Aesthetic value

Although architecturally unassuming, the building is well-detailed, and with its attractive garden setting makes a minor positive contribution to the local conservation area. The extension at the back is a sensitive, contextual addition. The meeting house is of medium aesthetic value.

Communal value

The meeting house is well used by Friends and local community groups. It is of high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *London West*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0008760*
- 1.3 Owner: *Six Weeks Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *London Borough of Ealing*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *London*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Ealing NPA*
- 1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*
- 1.8 NHLE: *N/a*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *Mount Park*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *1954; 1990*
- 1.13 Architect(s): *Hubert Lidbetter; John Marsh*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *14 September 2015*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Andrew Derrick*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Martin Raven*
- 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. 1, p. 389
London Borough of Ealing, *Mount Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal*, April
2009

Local Meeting Survey, by Debbie Abel, June 2015
Simon Dove, Planned Maintenance Report, March 2015

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

2.1 Historical background

Ealing Quakers met at the YMCA from 1904, but it was not until 1939-40 that the current site, a large plot in Woodville Road, was acquired (this was the site of a large house, according to the 1930 Ordnance Survey map). Here a meeting house was built in 1954 from designs by Hubert Lidbetter, Surveyor to Six Weeks Meeting, at a cost of £5,600. A classroom addition was built at the back in 1990 from designs by John Marsh, also Surveyor to Six Weeks Meeting, at a cost of £40,000.

2.2 The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

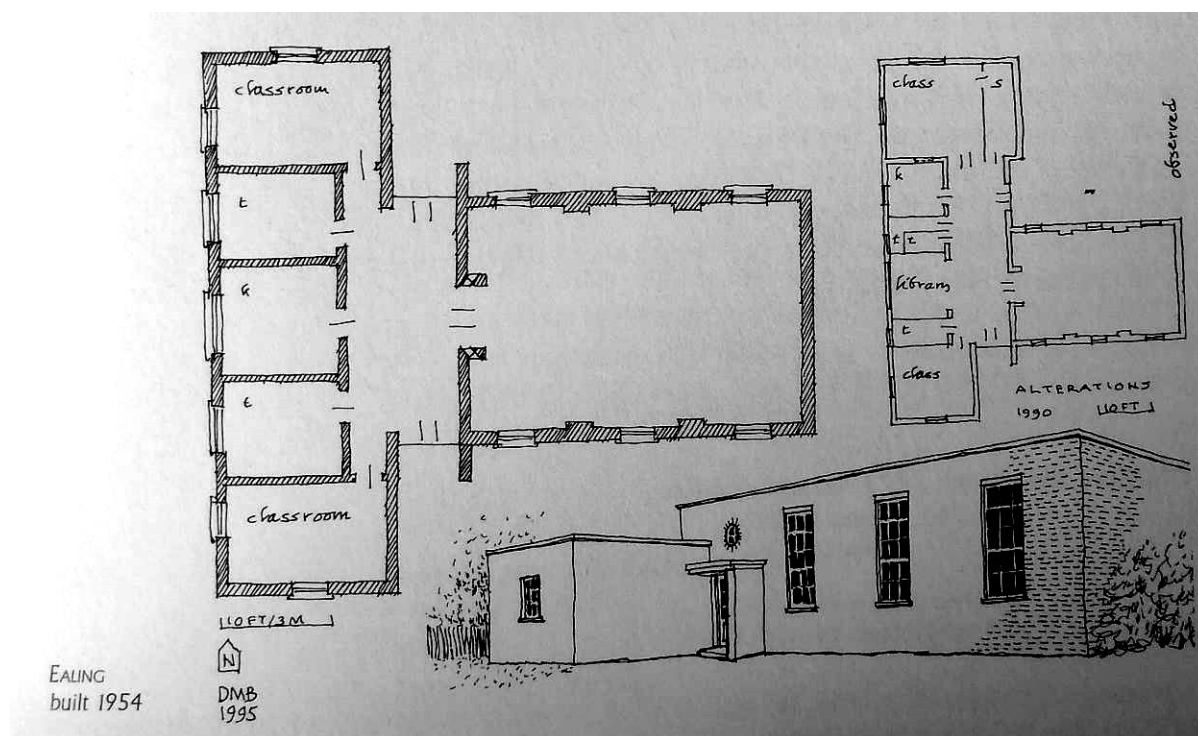


Figure 1: Plan and elevation, from Butler Vol. 1, p. 389

The meeting house was built in 1954 and extended in 1990 (see figure 1). It is T-shaped on plan, single storey and flat-roofed, with the large meeting room higher than the ancillary spaces placed at right angles. It is of cavity wall construction with bricks laid in stretcher bond and metal Crittall-type windows (three large openings on each of the long sides of the main meeting room). The addition at the back is contextually designed, with uPVC windows. A porch with flat projecting canopy is set in the angle between the main meeting room and the projecting range in front; over the canopy is a small circular window. Inside, the main meeting room has brick pilaster divisions between the windows, but otherwise the walls are plastered. It has a flat plastered ceiling and a woodblock floor. The remaining rooms are functional in character.

2.3 Loose furnishings

None of particular note. The stackable plastic chairs replaced Ercol chairs (information from Mr Raven).

2.4 Attached burial ground

None.

2.5 The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house occupies a large site, well planted out with mature trees and shrubs, in a residential street composed largely of late Victorian villas. Woodville Street was part of the former estate of the Wood family, developed after the extension of the Metropolitan line to Ealing in 1879. It lies within the Mount Park Conservation Area, and the local authority's Conservation Area Appraisal states:

‘Woodville Road branches from Haven Green and turns eastwards towards Corfton Road. The road gently rises along the hill from Haven Green and it is mainly flanked by small detached late Victorian houses. The predominant style is Victorian-Gothic characterised by the use of red brick, front gabled bays, mullioned stuccoed windows and slated roofs. At the Junction of Woodville Road with Aston Road is a cast iron street lamp dating from 1895 (Grade II Listed).’

The listed street lamp is near the entrance to the meeting house.

2.6 Listed status

Not listed. The meeting house is of modest architectural interest, and somewhat altered, and is not considered to be a candidate for listing.

2.7 Archaeological potential of the site

Low. The meeting house appears to have been built on the site of a late nineteenth century house.

Part 3: Current use and management

See completed volunteer survey

3.1 Condition

- i) Meeting House: Fair
- ii) Attached burial ground (if any): Not applicable

3.2 Maintenance

The most recent QIR was in March 2015; it concluded that the building was in fair condition. External defects needing remedy in the short term included brickwork and pointing repairs. The main recommendation was that ground plumbing clearance needed to be carried out more regularly.

3.3 Sustainability

The meeting uses the Sustainability Toolkit. Measures undertaken to improve energy efficiency have included cavity wall insulation (2011), a new boiler (2013), some pipe and door insulation, regular recycling and waste management. In the garden a wildflower area has been sown, with planting to attract bees. Some areas of grass are cut only annually. There is provision for secure bicycle storage and Ealing Broadway (five to eight minutes' walk from the meeting house) is served by regular bus, underground and mainline train services. There is on-site parking for about fourteen cars.

The QIR has recommended the fitting of secondary glazing to reduce heat loss, as the original metal windows do not otherwise need to be replaced (and it might be added that their replacement would be a loss to the character of the building).

3.4 Amenities

The meeting considers that it has the facilities it needs. These include a fitted kitchen, WCs, four rooms with meeting space and a library.

3.5 Access

The building is single-storey, with step-free access and circulation. White handrails have been fitted to the outside ramp. There is an accessible WC.

3.6 Community Use

The building is well used by Friends, about 24 hours a week. Other users occupy parts of the building for 80 hours out of a possible 240. There is a lettings policy, which refers to the fact that Quakers have a tradition of supporting groups that seem unconventional and different; Ealing Friends respect this tradition and try to apply the principle to current community needs. It states that 'we will refuse bookings from any group or individual whose words or actions diminish the dignity of any person or group of people'. In addition, branch meetings of political parties are not normally permitted.

Users of the building cite its convenient location, suitable rooms, disability access, parking availability, access to garden, atmosphere both in the meeting house and garden, and reasonable price.

3.7 Vulnerability to crime

Rubbish has been dumped in the front driveway, there was a break-in in 2013 (£5 stolen) and there was evidence of 'an uninvited sleeper' in 2014. Generally this is an area of relatively low crime and low deprivation. Liaison is maintained with the police when necessary.

3.8 Plans for change

None reported.

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 is flexible and fit for purpose. There are no heritage constraints governing internal adaptation, but any external changes should take account of the building's location in a conservation area.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: The building is already well used by local groups. Again, any external alterations required for wider use should take account of the conservation area status.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House: The building would lend itself to a number of uses, including residential. It occupies a large site, and more large-scale residential development is a more likely consequence of laying down, subject to planning (and bearing in mind the requirement to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area).

Part 5: Category: 3