

## **Quaker Meeting House, Finchley**

*58 Alexandra Grove, Finchley, London, N12 8HG*

*National Grid Reference: TQ 25800 92058*



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

***Built in 1967 to the designs of Hugh V. Sprince and Partners, the meeting house is a simple well-planned brick building with two main volumes, now under pitched roofs. It is admirably functional and is pleasing in appearance but is nevertheless of low heritage value overall.***

#### **Evidential value**

***The meeting house dates from 1967 and is of low evidential value because it has little potential to yield evidence about past human activity.***

#### **Historical value**

***The Stevenage meeting was established in 1965 and moved to this location in 1967. The building is of low historical value.***

#### **Aesthetic value**

***The original design has been slightly altered by the addition of pitched roofs instead of the original flat roofs, but is an attractive design of medium aesthetic value.***

#### **Communal value**

***The building has been in continuous use by Quakers and other local community groups for nearly fifty years and is of high communal value.***

## **Part 1: Core data**

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *North West London*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0008040*
- 1.3 Owner: *Six Weeks Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *London Borough of Barnet*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *London*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *West Finchley NPA*
- 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): *1967*
- 1.13 Architect (s): *Hugh V. Sprince & Partners*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *5 November 2015*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Neil Burton*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Warden*
- 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.390/1  
*The Friend*, 1967,1377  
Local Meeting survey by Richenda Solon October, June 2015

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

### **2.1. Historical background**

A meeting was established in 1952, for which a Victorian house was bought by Olaf and Lydia Hodgkin and let to the Friends for a meeting house. The house was later purchased from the Hodgkins by the Friends but it was sold almost immediately and a nearby site was bought on which a new meeting house was built, to the designs of Hugh V. Sprince & Partners. The new building opened in 1967. The original building had flat roofs. Twin pitched roofs were added in 1996 and the head of the open stair leading up to the warden's flat was enclosed with a glass conservatory.

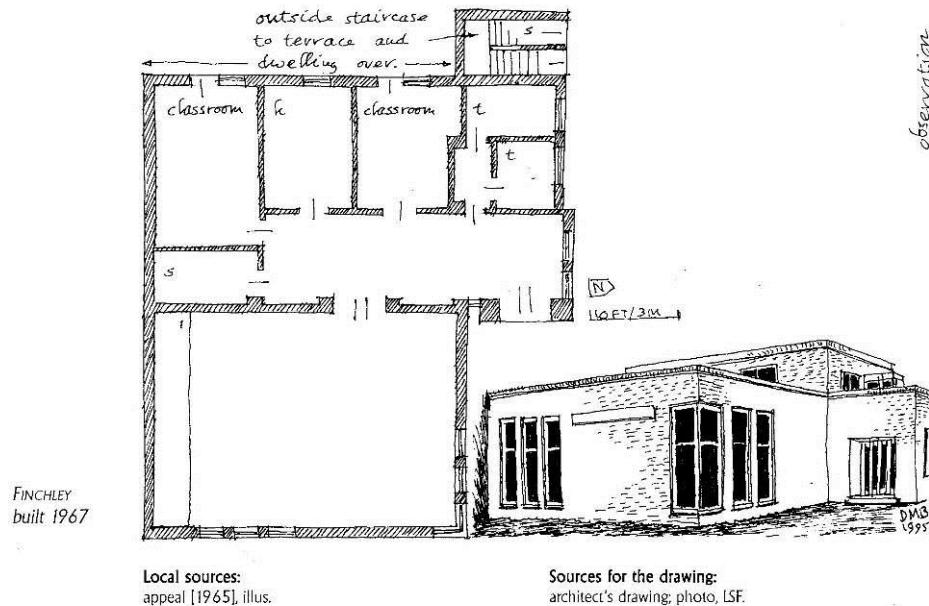


Fig.1 The plan of the building, with a perspective sketch, *Butler*, vol.1 p.391.  
(Butler's compass direction is wrong: north is at the top of the plan)

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

The building is in a simple modern style. The plan consists of two rectangular volumes. One contains the single-storey main meeting room. The larger volume behind is two-storeyed, with the ancillary rooms on the ground floor and the warden's accommodation above. The walls are of yellow stock brick laid in stretcher bond, with large rectangular window openings. The building was originally flat-roofed, but in 1996 twin shallow-pitched hipped roofs were erected over the front and rear volumes. A separate smaller roof was erected over the entrance lobby and stair on the north side of the building. All these roofs are covered with metal, possibly lead. The main meeting room is a restful space, rectangular on plan with a cork floor, plain plastered walls with full-height windows and a flat ceiling with timber cross-beams.

## 2.3 Loose furnishings

There are some timber benches in the meeting room which look older than 1967 and may have been brought from another meeting house.

## 2.4. Attached burial ground

None

## 2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The building stands set back from the street in this relatively affluent suburban residential where the buildings are a mixture of late Victorian villas, twentieth-century detached and semi-detached houses and small blocks of flats.

## 2.6. Listed status

The building is relatively modern and has been altered. It is not a candidate for listing.

## 2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

The site has 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): Not applicable

### **3.2. Maintenance**

The last quinquennial inspection was made in 2011 and was carried out by a suitably qualified person. There are no outstanding works of repair and the warden's flat has been refurbished since the report was made. There is a reserve fund for emergencies but Six Weeks Meeting covers the cost of repair and maintenance. There is a maintenance plan which covers re-decorating and refurbishment, as well as *ad hoc* items like repairing the hearing loop or replacing the external notice-board.

### **3.3. Sustainability**

The meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit but has implemented some measures to reduce its environmental impact. These include the following:

- The energy supplier has been changed to that recommended by the Area Meeting.
- Where possible, all waste is recycled
- The establishment of a bee garden has been discussed.

The building does not have an Energy Performance Certificate but the meeting would consider obtaining one.

### **3.4. Amenities**

The meeting has all the amenities it needs in the meeting house including a good-sized kitchen, toilets, two meeting rooms and a library. There is a resident warden. There is good public transport, with a bus station and mainline railway station within walking distance. There is a fair-sized car park next to the meeting house.

### **3.5. Access**

The meeting house is accessible to people with disabilities. There is level access into and inside the building, an accessible WC, a hearing loop and facilities for partially-sighted people. There has not been a Disability Access Audit.

### **3.6 Community Use**

Friends use the building for about 3 hours per week. The building is available for community lettings for a maximum number of about 90 hours per week and is used for approximately 36 hours per week. The meeting has a lettings policy. No alcohol is allowed. Children's parties are only allowed at the MH's discretion. Bookings are mainly from local individuals and community groups, not from commercial concerns.

### **3.7. Vulnerability to crime**

There are few signs of general crime, but there has been some heritage crime. Lead was stolen from the roof about 5 years ago. The theft was reported to the police. The locality is generally well cared-for and has low crime levels, low deprivation and high community confidence. There has been some liaison with the Local Neighbourhood Policing Team.

### 3.8. Plans for change

There are no changes in prospect

### **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*: there has already been some change to the building with the addition of pitched roofs. There is probably scope for further change if required.
- ii) *For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use*; there is probably scope for further change if required.
- iii) *Being laid down as a Meeting House*; the building could doubtless find another use, if laid down.

### **Part 5: Category: 4**