

Quaker Meeting House, Frandley

Sandiway Lane, Frandley, Antrobus, Northwich, CW9 6LD

National Grid Reference: SJ 63614 79234



Statement of Significance

The building has high heritage significance as a fine example of a nineteenth century meeting house, replacing a seventeenth century building on the same site. The meeting room retains much of its original interior simplicity and Victorian fittings, in a rural setting which includes a schoolroom and stable building dating from 1726 (listed Grade II).

Evidential value

It is likely that there are below-ground remains of the earlier meeting house on this rural site. The buildings and site are of medium evidential value.

Historical value

The site and the buildings have high historical value, as a seventeenth century Quaker site, redeveloped in the nineteenth century. The meeting house interior retains historic features including the panelled gallery and some seating. Frandley meeting has strong associations with George Fox, the founder of the Religious Society of Friends which adds to its historical significance.

Aesthetic value

The meeting house has a high aesthetic value. It is an attractive late Victorian building which retains much of its original external and internal architectural detail. With the 1726 school room and stable, it makes a positive contribution to the street scene.

Communal value

Frandley Meeting has been the centre of a thriving Quaker community since the 1670s. The site has high communal value for the meeting house used for worship and for a wide variety of community purposes.

Part 1: Core data

1.1 Area Meeting: *East Cheshire*

1.2 Property Registration Number: *0015590*

1.3 Owner: *Friends Trust*

1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Cheshire West and Chester Council*

1.5 Historic England locality: *North West*

1.6 Civil parish: *Antrobus*

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): *1881*

1.13 Architect (s): *Unknown*

1.14 Date of visit: *5th June 2015*

1.15 Name of report author: *Emma Neil*

1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Michael Hennessey*

1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *Friends Sunday School (Grade II) and a detached burial ground (boundary walls Grade II) in nearby village of Higher Whitley (National Grid Reference: SJ 61642 79691).*

1.18 Attached burial ground: Yes

1.19 Information sources:

David M. Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1999), vol. 1, pp.48.

Religious Society of Friends, *A short History of Frandley Quaker Meeting*, 1989.

Alan Taylor, *Friends at Frandley over the years: 1650 – 2000*, 2001.

Michael Hennessey, *Local Meeting Survey*, April 2015

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

2.1. Historical background

Frandley has strong associations with early Quakerism. A yeoman from Frandley Farm named William Gandy became interested in Quaker ideas and invited George Fox to Frandley in 1657. Fox preached to over 2000 people under an oak tree in Frandley and shortly after Friends began to meet in each other's houses. In 1676, William Gandy donated land with a building (the original meeting house (Fig.1.)) for the local Quakers. The surrounding land was used as a burial ground. During this time Richard Starkey, the village squire, donated land to be used as a burial ground at Higher Whitely.



Figure 1: Sketch by Alfred Darbyshire in 1855 (Frandley Meeting House archives).

In 1726 a school room, stables and carriage shelter was built to the south of the meeting house, with external stairs to the first floor.

By the mid-nineteenth century the condition of the meeting house had become unsafe. The building was demolished and a new meeting house was built in its place in 1881, at right angles to the earlier buildings. The new building cost £600, funds for which were obtained from the sale of land owned by the Frandley Trust.

During the twentieth century the meeting house underwent some minor work to bring the building up to Friends' modern needs including: central heating installed during the 1930s, electric lighting in 1962 and redecoration in 1984.

In 2000, the Sunday school underwent some alterations which included the conversion of the lean-to into a garden room, and kitchen, toilets (including one fully accessible) and central heating were installed in the main school building.

In 2007, the porch to the meeting house had been taken down and a ramp built to provide better access.

In recent years, as a result of donations, damp treatment and redecoration has taken place in the meeting house and Sunday school. In 2015, the front boundary wall was repointed, the meeting room floor was sanded and stained and some benches replaced with chairs.

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

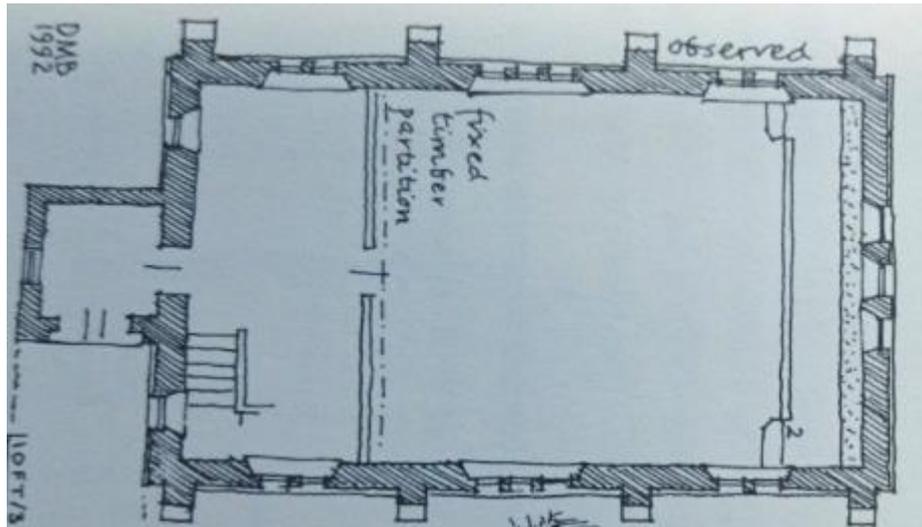


Figure 2: Ground floor plan of the meeting house as reconstructed by Butler (north at the top; not to scale) (Butler (1999), vol. 1, p.48)

The Victorian building is built in red brick laid in Flemish bond, with red terracotta and sandstone detailing, and a pitched roof covered in Welsh slates. The building is rectangular in plan and in gothic style resembling a chapel. The west gable-end entrance front has three stepped lancet windows with semi-circular heads lighting the gallery, a rounded brick header and stone sill. The ghost of the former porch is visible in the brickwork. The central doorway, accessed via a small ramp, has a timber planked door with fanlight. Either side of the entrance is single lancet windows with mould sill. The north and south elevations have a pair of 2-light lancet windows with semi-circular heads to each end with a 3-light window in the centre, all with rounded heads and stone mullion and sills. The elevations are articulated by brick buttresses. Below the eaves are moulded brick corbels with a dog tooth cornice. The rear gable to the east has a three stepped lancet window.

The interior is divided into two areas by a pine partition. The first area forms a small lobby area with pine flooring, timber dado panelling, a staircase leading to the gallery and the soffit of the gallery floor above is exposed with pine boards and joists. The meeting room has east-west aligned pine floorboards, and a fine exposed roof structure with two arch-braced collar trusses on stone corbels, two tiers of purlins and a dentilled wall plate. The interior has a panelled dado with a raised ministers' stand to the east and gallery to the west, with pine panelled front; the panels are filled with diagonal boarding.

2.3. Loose furnishings

The main meeting room contains historic pine benches (Fig.3) that were originally arranged to face the ministers' stand, are now arranged in a square. The loose modern chairs are arranged in a circle around a central oak table which appears to date from c1700.



Figure 3: Historic benches in meeting room

2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

The burial ground lies to the south (Fig.4.) of the meeting house. Burials took place between 1713 and 1782 and for cremations between 1957 and 2014. Whilst the burial ground is no longer accepting future burial of ashes, the detached burial ground at Whitley is still open. There are no headstones for the burials, only flat headstones that mark the positions of cremations. Older burial records are deposited at the Cheshire Records Office.



Figure 4: Attached burial ground south of the meeting house

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house and the adjacent 1726 Sunday school are located to the southern edge of Frandley village. The village consists of eighteenth and nineteenth buildings along with some twentieth century bungalows in a rural setting. The surrounding area is farm land providing picturesque views from the meeting house. The immediate setting of the meeting house is

enclosed by a red brick boundary wall with stone copings enclosing the landscaped burial ground and the Grade II listed Sunday school.

Whitley Burial Ground (Fig.5.) is located on the road between Lower Whitley on the south and Higher Whitley on the North. The National Grid Reference is SJ 61642 79691. The 618 square yard site has red sandstone walling listed at Grade II. The date of the earliest gravestone is 1686 for John Starkey; unusually for Quakers this gravestone is decorated with a shield engraved with scrolls to both side and a bird within the centre of the shield.



Figure 5: Whitley Burial Ground

2.6. Listed status

The meeting house is currently not listed. The adjacent Sunday school is listed at grade II and the meeting house is considered to be a possible candidate for statutory listing. The interior of the Victorian meeting room has been little altered and still retains a good set of historic fittings and joinery which contribute to its character. The main loss is the porch.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

The site of the meeting house has been the location of a meeting house since 1676 and contains an early Quaker burial ground. The archaeological potential of the site is considered to be medium.

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 Mellor Braggins) found the building to have been adequately maintained to a good standard for its age and type.

ii) Attached burial ground (if any): Optimal/generally satisfactory. The burial ground is well tended and the flat headstones are in good condition.

3.2. Maintenance

The meeting house does not have a five-year maintenance and repair plan. Members regularly monitor the meeting house along with undertaking the recommendations stated in the quinquennial survey. Since the last quinquennial survey the Friends have undertaken external painting, drainage work, damp treatment, internal decoration, tree removal and

regular roof maintenance. The Friends need Area Meeting support to undertake expensive repairs and maintenance.

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 some built-in insulation and damp treatment, which reduces energy use and costs.
- Resource use, recycling and waste management: Friends take material away to be recycled.
- 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 has access to all the amenities it needs. These are located in the adjacent Sunday school and include a kitchen area, WC's (fully accessible) and a meeting room on the first floor.

3.5. Access

A Disability Access Audit has not been undertaken. However, in 2007 alterations were made to the meeting house by installing a ramp to the main entrance. Internally the building has level access, however there is restricted access to the gallery. There is a hearing loop installed in the meeting room and a fully accessible WC is provided in the adjacent school room.

A limited bus service is available in Frandley, with no services provided on a Sunday. Car parking spaces are available opposite both the meeting house and school house.

3.6 Community Use

The meeting house is used by Friends for approximately 2.5 hours a week. The main meeting room is used for community use, and the school room is used for 35 hours each week during term-time (as a nursery). The Meeting does have a lettings policy; no smoking or alcoholic drinking is permitted, and political parties are not allowed to use the meeting house.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

The area has low crime levels and there has been one instance of heritage crime at the site which involved the theft of the wrought iron gate a few years ago.

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: The meeting house has all the facilities it currently needs. The bench furniture should be retained, if possible.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: The meeting house is currently well used for community use and has the facilities to support this.

ii) Being laid down as a Meeting House: the building could be adapted to serve a secular use, such as community use to compliment the adjoining school house; in the event of being laid-down, the main space should retain its spatial character and fittings, to avoid damaging its historic character.

Part 5: Category: 2

Part 6: List descriptions (s)

N.B. The list entry and description refers to Friends Sunday School, which is part of the property.

Name: **FRIENDS SUNDAY SCHOOL**

List entry Number: 1115574

Location

FRIENDS SUNDAY SCHOOL, SANIDWAY LANE

CountyDistrict	District Type	Parish
Cheshire West and Chester	Unitary Authority	Antrobus

Grade: II

Date first listed: 08-Jan-1970

Date of most recent amendment: 27-Aug-1986

Details

SJ 67 NW ANTROBUS C.P. SANDIWAY LANE Frandley

5/22 Friends Sunday School (formerly listed as Friends' Meeting House, Frandley) 8/1/70

II

Old Friends Meeting House, now Sunday School, altered. Brown brick in irregular English garden wall bond; grey slate roof. 2 storeys. 9-pane casements of C19 vernacular type inserted in face to road. Left gable-end has external stair with stone treads and quarter-landing, brick risers and stone-coped brick parapets. Stair forms porch to lower storey entrance. Replaced boarded doors. Vertical oval window to each side of upper door and horizontal leaded oval window in gable above door. Similar windows in opposite gable end, but with upper window blocked. Late C19 open slate-roofed brick outshut at rear. Cast iron plate inscribed 7 OAK TREES PLANTED 1897 IN THIS THE FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE YARD FRANDLEY, TO COMMEMORATE THE DIAMOND JUBILEE OF QUEEN VICTORIA, SEVENOAKS BEING THE NAME OF THE TOWNSHIP. Attached stone-coped brick wall to yard rising, with quadrant step to each side, over repaired gateway. Interior:

altered. Chamfered oak beam to upper floor. Roof structure boxed in, but with shaped supporting brackets to central truss visible.

Listing NGR: SJ6361479234

Name: **WALL ENCLOSING FRIENDS' BURIAL GROUND**

List entry Number: 1139135

Location

WALL ENCLOSING FRIENDS' BURIAL GROUND, VILLAGE LANE

CountyDistrict District Type Parish

Cheshire West and Chester Unitary Authority Whitley

Grade: II

Date first listed: 08-Jan-1970

Details

SJ 67 NW WHITLEY CP VILLAGE LANE West Side

5/122 Wall enclosing Friends 8.1.70 Burial Ground

- II

Wall, probably late C17, of 3 courses of large blocks of red sandstone with flush rounded copings. Plain square stone gateposts; boarded gate. The burial ground contains one exposed C17 stone slab inscribed HERE LYETH INTERRED THE BODI (sic) OF JOHN STARKEY LATE OF STRETTON GENT WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE THE 10TH DAY OF APRIL IN THE 44 YEAR OF HIS AGE ANNO DOMINI 1686 : POST FUNERA VIRTUS. On a shield beneath, with simple scroll to each side, is incised a bird, probably a swan, passant.

Listing NGR: SJ6163279677