

***Friends Meeting House, Godalming***

*The Mint, Mill Lane, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1HB*

*National Grid Reference: SU 96722 43793*



***Statement of Significance***

***The meeting house was built in c.1711 on a site owned by the local Quaker Caleb Woods. The burial ground was first used in 1709. Overall, the meeting house has high significance.***

***Evidential value***

***The fabric of the meeting house has the potential to reveal further information about its history and development. The building and the attached burial grounds have high evidential value.***

### **Historical value**

***The meeting house is an early eighteenth-century building which is largely unaltered. It has historical associations with generations of local Quakers and, in particular, the diarist Mary Waring who is buried here. It has high historical value.***

### **Aesthetic value**

***The meeting house comprises a fine meeting room with near-symmetrical elevations and a wing of more vernacular character. The picturesquely asymmetrical plan, the use of local materials and the patina of age give the building high aesthetic value.***

### **Communal value**

***The building was built as a Quaker meeting house and, more recently, has been also in additional community use. It has high communal value.***

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

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Surrey & Hampshire Border*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0012340*
- 1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Waverley Borough Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *South East*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Godalming*
- 1.7 Listed status: *II*
- 1.8 NHLE: *1352714*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *Godalming Centre*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *c.1711*
- 1.13 Architect(s): *Not established*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *23 October 2015*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Johanna Roethe*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Ruth Martin*
- 1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *None*
- 1.18 Attached burial ground: *Yes*
- 1.19 Information sources:

Butler, D.M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol. 2, pp. 589-590  
Stell, C., *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting-houses in Eastern England*,  
2002, p. 324

Wigfield, W.M., *A short history of Friends' meeting, Godalming, Surrey (with additions up to 2000 by D. and R. Farrant)*, 2004

Historic England Archive, Red Box Collection, photos of 1959 and 1970 and plan of 1969, <http://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/archive/archive-collections/englands-places/gallery/11374>

Local Meeting website, <http://www.godalmingquakers.org/godalming-quakers-history/>

Local Meeting survey by Ruth Martin, October 2015

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

### 2.1 Historical background

There were Quakers in Godalming by 1655 and a meeting was settled in about 1687. In 1698, the Quaker and maltster Caleb Woods bought Mill House. In 1701, donations were collected for a meeting house in Godalming and the money handed to Caleb Woods. This relates possibly to his purchase in 1702 of the property known as 'Goreways' which was adjacent to the Mill House, comprising a 'tenement with the curtilage, barn, gate room, garden and orchard'. By 1709 part of the property was in Quaker use as the first recorded burial on the site took place that year. Caleb Woods's will of 1711 refers to the 'new repaired' and 'new built other part' of the property, the latter of which probably relates to the meeting house. He bequeathed all his property to his youngest son, also called Caleb. In 1715, Caleb junior and his brother John sold 'all that messuage tenement and building now used for a meeting house of the people commonly called Quakers for their religious worship' to five Quaker trustees, together with the attached garden and burial ground, all for a term of 5,000 years at a peppercorn rent. (The meeting house contains a piece of wood engraved with the words 'Friends Meeting House 1714'; it is not known what event this commemorates.)

Opinions are divided about when the present building was erected: Stell and Butler date it to 1748 (the date cut into several bricks on the south elevation), which would make it a rebuild on the site of an earlier building. Wigfield seems to suggest that the meeting house is the late seventeenth-century building known as Goreways which was acquired by Woods in 1702. The list entry (see Part 6 below) gives '1715' as the date, i.e. the date of the acquisition by the Quakers. Based on stylistic analysis a late seventeenth or early eighteenth-century date seems more likely than 1748. The meeting room is certainly purpose built and probably is identical with the structure described as 'new built' in 1711. (Thus, the inscribed bricks with the date '1748' probably do not refer to the opening of the new building (as at Guildford (*qv*)) but some other event, such as the admission of new members of the meeting, as at Ifield (*qv*)).

In 1728, a fence to the garden was replaced with a new stone wall which was built by John Meals. From 1752, the rear burial ground was in use. In c.1772 a narrow detached block (now known as the Long Room) was added – possibly initially for use as stables – which was extended in 1808 as the women's meeting room. On 12 June 1794, the front windows were broken by a local mob as the Quakers refused to celebrate victory in the Fourth Battle of Ushant ('the Glorious First of June') by placing candles in the windows. In 1868, the meeting was discontinued and in around 1900 the building was let to the Brethren. In 1923, it was sold to Francis Ashby, a member of Guildford meeting, but it was bought back after his death soon after. The meeting house re-opened in 1926 and was repaired in 1938. The small meeting room was used as a classroom with a kitchen extension. Until the 1950s, there was a central stove in the meeting room, beside a central timber post (removed in c.2001). In the 1970s, the partition between the kitchen and the former women's meeting room was moved to enlarge the kitchen. In 1988-91, a number of repairs were made which included the re-roofing of the Long Room, the renewal of door and window lintels in the meeting room, the repair of a chimney and the replacement of the panelling behind the elders' and ministers' stand. In 1994, the meeting room was re-roofed.

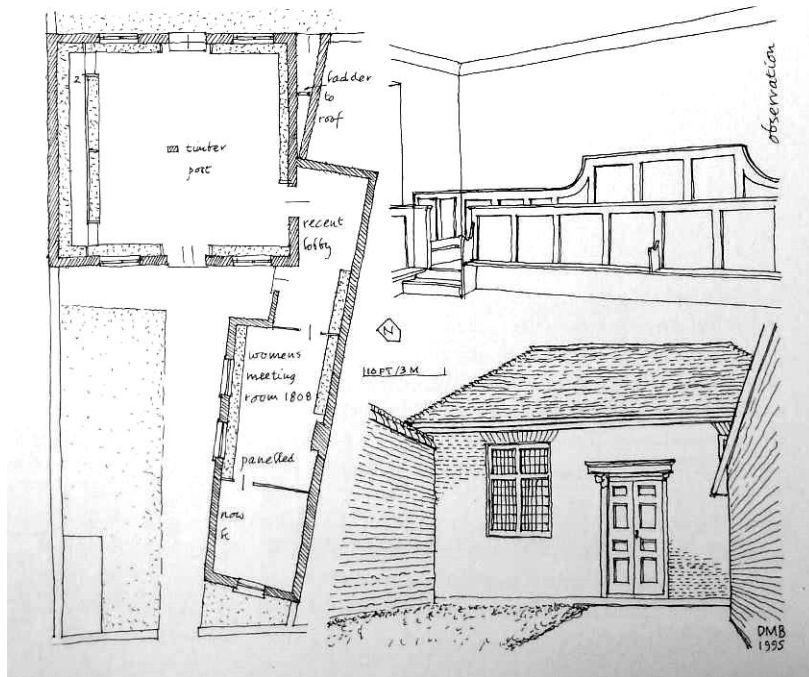


Figure 1: Plan, internal and external perspective view (plan: northeast is at the bottom; not to scale) (Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol. 2, p. 589)

## 2.2 The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The main elevation of the meeting house faces northeast. The meeting room is a square building of c.1711 with a long wing (known as the Long Room) of c.1772 and 1808 along the west boundary wall. The materials are red brick laid in Flemish bond. The brick of the wing is of poorer quality, with some vitrified bricks. Both parts have handmade clay tile roofs. The roof of the meeting room is hipped with a central valley gutter, that of the wing gabled. The three-bay front elevation of the meeting room has a central doorway with a double door of eight raised and fielded panels under a bracketed hood. On either side are large wooden cross-windows with leaded lights and one casement each, under rubbed and gauged flat brick arches. The rear elevation is similar but with stepped brick eaves. Here, the six-panelled door has only a small hood, the base of the wall has two areas of Bargate stone with galleting, and the lintels of door and windows are of brick in rowlock courses. On either side of the central rear door are bricks with initials and various dates including 1748 and 1890. At the west corner is a small lean-to shed (not shown on Butler's plan), beside a door to a triangular space with a ladder into the roof void (figure 1).

The wing is attached to the northwest corner of the meeting house and continues part-way along its northwest side elevation. The entrance is near the corner with the meeting room, via a six-panel door in a narrow bay. To the north is a long gabled range whose south gable is tile-hung. The wing's east elevation has two three-light leaded windows of which the southern one dates from the twentieth century. The north gable has a six-panel door and a two-light leaded window. The west elevation has no windows and abuts the former yard wall of galleted rubble stone with oversailing domed coping. There is a brick chimneystack about halfway along.

The meeting room has a panelled dado which sweeps up to three taller panels behind the elders' and ministers' stand at the east. There are fixed benches on the other three walls. The T-shaped ceiling beams with RSJs date from c.2001 when a central post was removed (which was found to have no structural function but related to the former stove). The wall clock by J. Stapleton is a replacement of the clock stolen in 1989. The four-panelled door into the wing

has a wooden bar latch. The meeting room floor is of timber. Small plaques on the dado and the front bench of the stand commemorate those whose ashes are buried or scattered in the burial ground.

The southern part of the lobby is lit by a skylight and has few historic features. Its northern half has a fixed bench against the west wall which continues in the adjoining small meeting room (the former women's meeting room). The latter also has a fixed bench against the east wall and a panelled dado. The former fireplace to the west is boarded up. The partition to the south is of timber (photo bottom right on p. 1), that to the north is a part-glazed partition which was moved (or replaced) further south in the 1970s. The kitchen is at the northern end of the wing.

### 2.3 Loose furnishings

The meeting room has eight historic open-backed benches, said to be of beech. In addition, two benches are replicas of the early 1990s.

### 2.4 Attached burial ground (if any)

There are burial plots to the front and rear of the building. The front burial ground has no surviving headstones; it was first used in 1709. The rear burial ground was first used in 1752; the last burial took place in 1885. It is still used for the scattering of ashes. The boundary walls are of rubble stone (one or all built in 1728), with an area of brick near the southeast corner. It has a few headstones leaning against the boundary walls, most of which of the arched shape usual for Quaker burial grounds. Those that are legible date from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Two are of an unusual shape for Quaker headstones, with canted top corners. In the southeast corner is an even more unusual marble ledger slab commemorating Waring Kidd (died 1884) and his family. There is one memorial plaque of 1952 on the east wall. In the northeast corner is a cherry tree planted as a Nagasaki memorial. A burial plan is kept in Godalming Library and the burial or scattering of ashes is recorded in a book held at the meeting house.

Notable people buried here include Mary Waring (1760-1805), clerk of the women's meeting (1791-1805) and an Elder of the meeting (1804-5). She kept a diary from 1791 until she died which was published by her family in 1809 (*A diary of the religious experience of M. W. late of Godalming*).

### 2.5 The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house is located in the centre of Godalming. The Mint is a short cul-de-sac parallel with Mill Lane. The meeting house site is several steps above the level of the Mint. To the front is a yard with the older burial ground, bounded by the listed yard wall to the east and the meeting house wing to the west. Near the entrance to the front yard (which has a wrought-iron gate) is a detached lean-to toilet block. Attached to the west of the meeting house are two cottages (in separate ownership), formerly one seventeenth-century timber-framed house (listed grade II). The meeting house makes a positive contribution to the conservation area.

A detached burial ground in Binscombe Lane (SU 96730 45923) was given by Thomas Patching and, according to Butler, was in use from 1666 (Stell: 1659, Wigfield: 1695) to 1790 with 188 recorded burials. From 1790 it was let as a garden and in 1864 it was sold to J. More Molyneux of Loseley Park for £30. An adjacent barn known as 'Fox's Barn', where George Fox preached in 1655, has been converted to a house. The barn and the walls of the burial ground are both listed grade II. In 1966, the Godalming meeting unsuccessfully tried to reacquire the burial ground. In 1988, a plaque was put up at the site, commemorating the burials there.

## 2.6 Listed status

The meeting house is correctly listed at grade II. The dates in the entry need to be revised.

The yard walls are separately listed at grade II. Their list entry might be revised to include at least the west wall to the rear burial ground, which is a continuation of the front yard wall (photo top right, p. 1).

## 2.7 Archaeological potential of the site

The meeting house appears to have been built on the site of an earlier building. This, together with the two burial grounds, lends the site high archaeological potential. During recent gardening work, old wrought-iron door furniture was found on the site (a circular drop handle and a thumb latch lever, both kept in the meeting room).

## **Part 3: Current use and management**

*See completed volunteer survey*

### 3.1 Condition

- i) Meeting House: Fair (but repairs to the rainwater goods to the west of the wing are in progress)
- ii) Attached burial ground (if any): Optimal/generally satisfactory

### 3.2 Maintenance

The last quinquennial inspection took place in 2012 (architects: Nye Saunders). Most items have been attended to, apart from repointing the mortar joints damaged by masonry bees. At the time of the visit (October 2015) repairs were in progress to the gutters on the west side of the Long Room lobby which have caused damp and water ingress. Once these works have been completed, the interior of the lobby will be redecorated. Also at the time of the visit, there was black mould on the ceiling of the detached toilet block.

### 3.3 Sustainability

It is not known if the meeting uses the Sustainability Toolkit. It has implemented measures to reduce its environmental impact. These include:

- Climate change & energy efficiency: installation of electricity meter to isolate meeting room, secondary glazing, loft insulation
- Resource use, recycling & waste management: recycling where possible
- Building maintenance & refurbishment: building redecorated externally, eradication of long-term damp problem in consultation with neighbour, some inside redecoration planned
- Wildlife, ecology and nature conservation: composting in rear garden, 'bug hotel', bird box
- Transport: car share, walking or cycling where possible

The meeting does not have an Energy Performance Certificate.

### 3.4 Amenities

The meeting has all the amenities it needs. Meeting rooms and the kitchen are in the meeting house, while the toilets are in a detached block. There is no resident Warden.

The meeting is accessible by public transport. There is no parking on site but there are several public car parks close by. There is no secure parking for bicycles but they can be left in the front garden.

### 3.5 Access

There is no step-free access to the site. There are five steps from the street to the front yard, with further steps to the entrance doors. The larger toilet in the toilet block has a frame to assist those with mobility problems but it is not a fully accessible toilet. There is a hearing loop but no facilities for partially-sighted people. The meeting has not conducted a Disability Access Audit and considers that further adjustments are not feasible due to the hilly site and the listed status of the building.

### 3.6 Community Use

Friends use the meeting house for 3 hours per week. The building is available for community lettings for a maximum number of 40 hours per week. It is used for an average of 12 hours per week. The meeting does not have a lettings policy. Groups whose aims and beliefs are at odds with Quaker values are excluded. Users value the meeting house for its competitive pricing.

### 3.7 Vulnerability to crime

There are no signs of general crime or anti-social behaviour at the site. A break-in occurred during which empty collection boxes were broken open. Another attempted break-in (through one of the rear windows) was foiled by secondary glazing. In 1989, the antique clock in the meeting room was stolen using a key from a stolen briefcase. More recently, the engraved timber with the date 1714 disappeared and was anonymously returned. (This is now in a secure display case.) Unreported incidents include homeless people sleeping in the toilets and lighting a fire in the front garden.

The locality is generally well-cared for, has low crime levels, low deprivation and high community confidence. There is currently no liaison with the Local Neighbourhood Policing Team but the meeting might consider making contact if necessary.

### 3.8 Plans for change

Apart from the planned internal redecoration of the lobby, no changes are planned.

## **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 required facilities, apart from level access and internal toilets. Both of these are difficult to provide at the site and within the constraints of the listed building.

*ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use:* While community use of the meeting house could be higher, it is not significantly constrained by the lack of level access and internal toilets. Any alterations would need to be sympathetic to the special interest of the listed building.

*iii) Being laid down as a Meeting:* Should the building cease to be used as a Quaker meeting house, a new sympathetic use would need to be found which would not require any detrimental alterations. It could easily continue in community use.

## **Part 5: Category: 2**

## Part 6: List description(s)

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE

List entry Number: 1352714

Location

FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, MILL LANE

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

| County | District | District Type      | Parish    |
|--------|----------|--------------------|-----------|
| Surrey | Waverley | District Authority | Godalming |

Grade: II

Date first listed: 18-Dec-1947

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

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 291453

List entry Description

Details

GODALMING MILL LANE SU 9643 NE (south side) 12/172 Friends Meeting House, The 18.12.47 Mint GV II

Friends Meeting House. 1715, with wing added 1808. Red brick in Flemish bond, addition of poorer quality brick, some vitrified. Plain tile roofs. one storey, 3-bay meeting house with later wing projecting on right and built up against former yard wall. Meeting house: large central doorway, with double door of 8 raised and fielded panels under deep, console-bracketed hood. To either side, a large, wooden cross-window with leaded lights and one casement to each. Hipped roof. Wing: narrow bay on left, with door of 6 flush panels (top 2 glazed), links meeting house to 3-bay range which has two 3-light leaded windows, that on left C20, and a stack at rear; gable end of wing has door of 6 flush panels in reveal and large, 2-light, leaded window; right return is of galleted rubblestone, approximately 2 metres high, with oversailing domed coping, this formerly being yard wall. Rear of meeting house has two cross- windows with diamond-leading flanking central 6-panel door all with flat, header-brick arches; stepped eaves. Interior of meeting house: panelled dado and elders' pew. Photograph of plan held in National Monuments Record.

Listing NGR: SU9671743798



## ***Yard wall***

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: YARD WALLS TO FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE

List entry Number: 1044471

Location

YARD WALLS TO FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, MILL LANE

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

| County | District | District Type      | Parish    |
|--------|----------|--------------------|-----------|
| Surrey | Waverley | District Authority | Godalming |

Grade: II

Date first listed: 01-Feb-1991

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

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 291454

List entry Description

Details

GODALMING MILL LANE SU 9643 NE (south side) 12/173 Yard walls to Friends Meeting House, The Mint GV II

Yard walls to Friends Meeting House (q.v). Probably 1715 as meeting house, altered. Bargate rubblestone with brick coping. The walls enclose the yard on the front and left-hand sides, with a later iron gate at right side of front wall. Left-hand wall approximately 3 metres high with ridged coping; front wall approximately 2 metres high with flat coping and brick piers to gateway. The former right-hand yard wall is now incorporated in the range which was built against it (q.v Friends Meeting House).

Listing NGR: SU9672643802