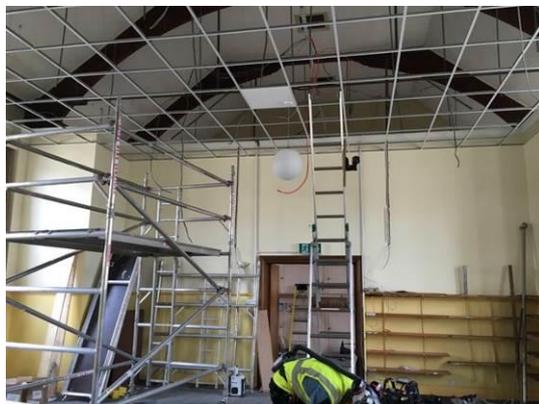


## ***Quaker Meeting House, Horfield***

*300 Gloucester Road, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 8PD*

*National Grid Reference: ST 59253 76019*



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

***A handsome Edwardian design, making a prominent and positive contribution to the local scene. The building is of overall medium significance.***

### ***Evidential value***

***The building was purpose-built as a Quaker meeting house, and its use is proclaimed on a stone tablet over the entrance. A more recent ceramic panel is further evidence of Quaker witness. The building is of medium evidential value.***

**Historical value**

***The meeting house was built in 1908-9, on the site of earlier cottages. It is of medium historical value.***

**Aesthetic value**

***The exterior is a handsome brick and stone-built Edwardian design, combining classical and Tudor/Jacobean elements, and making a prominent and positive contribution to the local scene. The interior is more altered. Overall, the building is of medium aesthetic value.***

**Communal value**

***The building is well used by the wider community as well as by Friends, and is of high communal value.***

**Part 1: Core data**

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Bristol*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0031820*
- 1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Bristol City Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *South West*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *City of Bristol 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): *1909*
- 1.13 Architect(s): *A. P. I. Cotterell*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *1 September 2016*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Andrew Derrick*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Judi Brill, John Mayne*
- 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.2, p.526

*The Friend*, 12 March 1909

Local Meeting Survey, by Judi Brill, April 2016

Quentin Alder Architects, Quinquennial Inspection Report, 2012

Horfield Local Meeting, *History of Horfield Meeting*, PowerPoint slideshow of historical images, n.d.

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

### 2.1 Historical background

The Horfield meeting opened in 1899, meeting for worship from 1901 in a tin tabernacle previously in Baptist use. In 1903 two properties (Spring Cottages) on the opposite side of the road were acquired, and after a short period in use by the meeting were demolished to make way for the present meeting house. This was built in 1908-9, from designs by Albert Player Isaac Cotterell AMICE (1861-1951), a Quaker and sanitary engineer. It opened on 5 March 1909. The plan of the building and some of the detailing is similar to Henry Williams' earlier (1884) meeting house at Redland (*qv*), although smaller. A five-bay meeting room was placed at the rear and was designed to accommodate 300 people. The front range facing the street had a kitchen and stores in the basement (through which a spring ran, hence Spring Cottages) and a women's meeting room on the ground floor. At first floor, Cotterell's plans (copies of which are held by the meeting) show a recreation room and a smaller room for players of chess and draughts; at the opening, he said the building had been called 'a glorified public house', and that 'in its social objects their aim was to draw people together and influence their lives in higher directions'. The cost was £3,000. It was designed to allow for later extension (a classroom addition at the back of the main meeting room), which explains the improvised roughcast appearance of the rear elevation.

The interior was altered in 1961, when the main meeting room was reduced in size in order to create a lobby. Possibly at the same time, the first floor was converted to warden's accommodation.

In 2009, the front courtyard was re-landscaped as a Peace Garden for the centenary of the meeting house. This included an eye-catching panel of ceramic squares, depicting the flora and fauna of creation and bearing the words PEACE, EQUALITY, SIMPLICITY and TRUTH, made by local Friends, under the direction of the Quaker ceramist Sandra McQueen.

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

Built in 1908-9 from designs by A. P. I. Cotterell, the meeting house consists of a two-storey frontage range, housing a small meeting room and ancillary spaces, and a single storey main meeting room behind. The building is faced with red brick laid in English bond with Bath stone dressings, under a hipped slate roof with overhanging eaves and coved cornice. The architectural style is eclectic, mainly classical but with Tudor/Jacobean elements. A broad stone band dividing the storeys, supported at the corner by an off-centre portico *in antis*, with Tuscan columns providing a sheltered approach to the recessed entrance. Above this is a large pedimented stone tablet with the framed inscription FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE 1908. The central bay of the front elevation has four-light cross mullion windows to both floors, while in the right hand bay two-light cross mullion windows balance the entrance portico and inscribed tablet. The original windows have been replaced by timber double glazed units. At the entrance side, the broad stone band continues around the side and across a single storey WC block. In front of the latter is a small paved courtyard, enclosed by railings. On the north side, the stone band returns for about a third of the flank elevation. To the rear, the meeting room has a low-key external appearance, with common facing bricks on the north side and roughcast render on the rear and south sides.

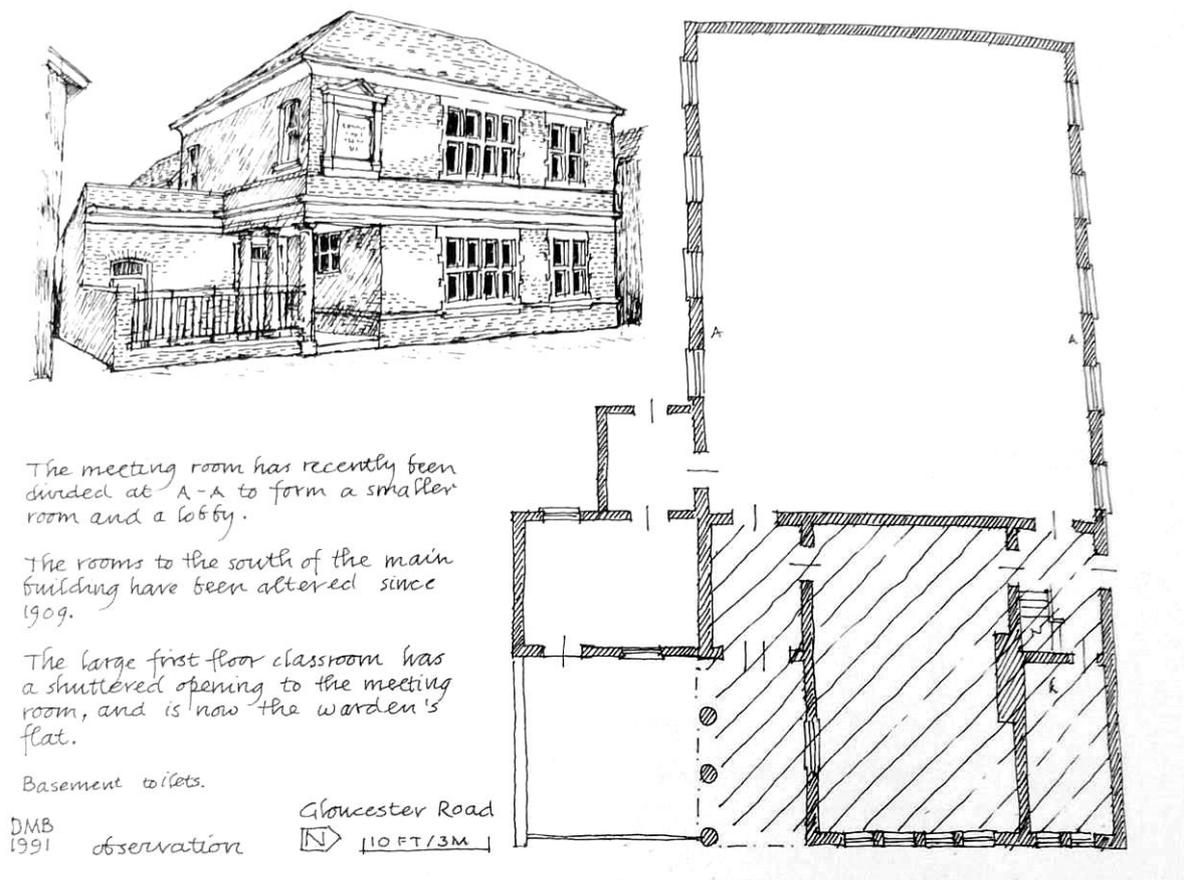


Figure 1: Ground floor plan and elevation, from Butler, Vol.2, 1999, p. 526

Inside, the main meeting room has been reduced from the original five bays to three, so is now roughly square on plan. A suspended ceiling conceals the original open arch-braced roof, temporarily exposed during recent building works (photo middle right on page 1). The floor is of polished woodblocks, and there is a high perimeter dado. The room is well-lit by windows on the north and south sides. At the front, the former women's meeting room is now a children's room, and is gaily painted with animal murals; it retains its original fireplace and high boarded dado. The upper floor, now the warden's flat, has not been inspected.

### 2.3 Loose furnishings

There are no loose furnishings of particular note.

### 2.4 Attached burial ground (if any)

None.

### 2.5 The meeting house in its wider setting

Horfield is a northern suburb of Bristol. The meeting house faces onto Gloucester Road, the main shopping street, and a busy road heading north from the city centre. There is a small garden at the rear, slightly enlarged when part of the back garden of nearby 2 Thornleigh Road was incorporated after sale of that Quaker-owned property.

## 2.6 Listed status

Not listed. The meeting house is an attractive and externally little-altered Edwardian design. While not considered to be listable, it would merit consideration for inclusion in the City Council's local list.

## 2.7 Archaeological potential of the site

The meeting house was built (with a basement) on the site of earlier cottages, and before that was agricultural land. The below-ground archaeological potential is likely to be low.

## **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 most recent QIR (2012) identified a number of repair and maintenance issues, which have been attended to. The building is generally well maintained and the main meeting room has recently been refurbished. Area Meeting pays for repairs, with the local meeting responsible for maintenance and improvements.

### 3.3 Sustainability

The meeting uses the Sustainability Toolkit. Measures taken to improve energy efficiency and reduce environmental impact include the provision of solar panels on the south-facing roof of the main meeting room, replacement timber double-glazed windows, additional insulation in the roof space and the introduction of insulation in the cellar. The usual local authority recycling arrangements are in place.

### 3.4 Amenities

The meeting considers that it has (almost) all the amenities it needs. These include two meeting rooms, a kitchen, WCs and on-site accommodation for the warden. A shower adjacent to the accessible WC is the one thing felt to be lacking.

The meeting house is well served by public transport, with a bus stop immediately outside. There is no on-street or off-street car parking, but parking spaces are available in the supermarket car park opposite, for which there is no charge on Sundays. There is secure parking for two bicycles in the front courtyard.

### 3.5 Access

The meeting has not carried out an Access Audit, but the building and its services are accessible. There is step-free access into and around the ground floor, an accessible WC, hearing loop and provision for partially sighted people.

### 3.6 Community Use

In addition to use by Friends for approximately four to six hours a week, the meeting house and its facilities are used by other groups for approximately seventy out of a possible 112 hours a week. Quaker Groups and a local counselling service use the facilities free of charge and there are reductions for charities and children's classes. Users appreciate the good

location, the quiet, warm and well-priced facilities, and the fact that the building is safe (kept locked and with a resident warden).

### 3.7 Vulnerability to crime

There have been instances of opportunistic theft, including lead theft (heritage crime), breaking of windows and graffiti. These incidents have been reported, and Friends have developed a liaison with the local Neighbourhood Policing Team. The area is said to suffer from crime and social deprivation, and has low community confidence.

### 3.8 Plans for change

A new external door to the garden is all that remains to be done after the recently-completed works of refurbishment.

## **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 largely meets current needs. It was designed to be extended at the rear, and this could still be done, although at the expense of the garden space. There are no heritage constraints governing internal change, but external change, especially to the handsome and prominent front range would need to be carefully considered, especially if the building was to be added to the local list.

*ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use:* The building is already in regular use by the wider community, and the same considerations as above would apply.

*iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House:* The building is of local architectural and historical interest, and in the event of being closed it would be desirable for a suitable alternative use to be found. It would lend itself to a range of uses, including residential, office and retail, subject to planning.

## **Part 5: Category: 3**