

Friends Meeting House, Horsham

Worthing Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 1SL

National Grid Reference: TQ 16848 30553



Statement of Significance

The meeting house and the attached cottage were built in 1786. Hubert Lidbetter built a small rear extension in 1939. As a fine Georgian building with original furnishings the meeting house has high significance.

Evidential value

The meeting house is relatively little altered and has high evidential value.

Historical value

The meeting house has high historical value due to its illustrative value and the association with the palaeontologist George Bax Holmes who is buried here.

Aesthetic value

The building has high aesthetic value, in particular due to the arched windows with decorative glazing bars.

Communal value

The building has high communal value due to its use as a Quaker meeting house which is also in community use.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *West Weald*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0020690*
- 1.3 Owner: *Friends Trusts Ltd*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Horsham District Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *South East*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Horsham NPA*
- 1.7 Listed status: *II*
- 1.8 NHLE: *1353961*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *No*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *1786*
- 1.13 Architect(s): *Not established*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *10 September 2015*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Johanna Roethe*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Tony Cocks*
- 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. 605-6

Nairn, I. and N. Pevsner, *Sussex (Buildings of England)*, 1965, p. 247

Stell, C., *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting-houses in Eastern England*, 2002, p. 346

History of Horsham Quaker Meeting House,

<http://horshamquakers12.btck.co.uk/HistoryofHorshamMeetingHouse>

Extracts from 'Some Notes on the properties held by Dorking and Horsham Monthly Meeting', January 2006

Local Meeting archive, sketch site plans

Local Meeting survey by Tony Cocks, June 2015

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

2.1. Historical background

There were Quakers in Horsham by 1671 but no meeting house existed until after the Toleration Act of 1689. In 1693, land was acquired (with a 2000-year lease) in the Worthing Road for use as a burial ground and meeting house. There appears to have been a sixteenth-century cottage towards the road; a meeting house was probably built behind it, at the rear of

the site. The first recorded use of the burial ground took place in 1697. By 1785, the meeting house was in poor condition and the following year, a new one (with an attached cottage) was built closer to the road, while the old building was demolished. This opened in 1786 and funds totalling £536 14s 5.5d were raised to pay for it. In 1939, it was extended to the rear with a classroom and kitchens (architect: Hubert Lidbetter) for £400. In 1961, the meeting house was re-roofed and repaired, also by Lidbetter. Roof repairs and internal redecoration works were recently (2015) completed (architect: Simon Dyson of HMDW Architects).

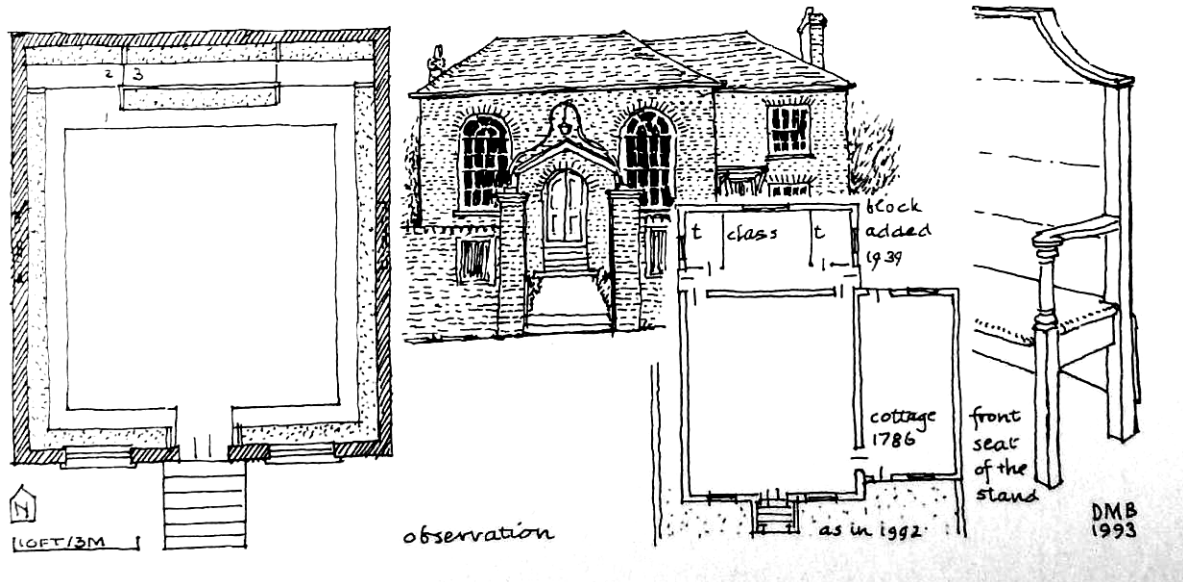


Figure 1: Original plan, elevation, plan as in 1992 and detail (Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol. 2, pp. 605)

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The main elevation faces southeast. The meeting house has an oblong plan, while the cottage (attached to the north) is narrower and shorter. The materials are red brick laid in Flemish bond. The base of all external walls, as well as the rear and side elevations have burnt headers and bricks laid in English bond. The hipped roof with a central flat roof has handmade tiles. The rear extension has a similar hipped roof with handmade tiles. Below the eaves is a cornice of three courses of moulded brick. The main entrance is in a gabled porch with a rubbed and gauged brick arch. On either side are tall arched windows with metal glazing bars under similar brick arches. The southwest elevation has a single sash window (8 over 8 panes) under a fanlight of similar glazing bar patterns. Just beside it is an external square brick stack (not shown on Butler). Just visible above the roof of the rear extension are two blocked windows under segmental brick arches. The extension has a door and a window at each end, with a rear elevation of a four-light small-paned central window flanked by two small windows.

The two-leaf six-panelled entrance doors lead straight into the meeting room. This is a square room with a suspended timber floor and a suspended ceiling (with new acoustic panels). The walls have dado-panelling which curves up behind the former elders' and ministers' stand on the wall opposite of the entrance. There is a dais around three sides of the room with fixed benches. In the corners are four Tobin's Tubes, short metal ventilation flues which draw in fresh air via grilles in the external walls (and the former external walls now inside the extension). The meeting room is lit by three windows and new pendant lights (similar to those at Ifield (qv) and Dorking (qv)). The extension contains a kitchen, a small meeting room and toilets.

The cottage has a separate hipped and tiled roof. There is one chimneystack near the east corner. Its front elevation has two 8-over-8 sashes and the four-panelled front door under a later canopy. Its rear elevation appears to have been altered. Two windows and a door on the ground floor have concrete lintels, while the two metal windows on the upper floor have brick lintels of soldier courses. The interior was not inspected.

2.3 Loose furnishings

The elders' bench is a moveable bench with a panelled back with cusped corners which match the shape of the dado behind. There are four open-backed benches in the meeting room whose turned arm-rest supports match those of the fixed benches. There is one wall-mounted clock. Stell also mentions two early eighteenth-century coffin stools with turned legs.

2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

The attached burial ground to the front of the meeting house has long been disused and is now landscaped as a garden. All headstones have been removed, apart from two which have been laid flat as paving slabs. These are the headstones for Charles Saunders (died 1881), his wife Rachel (died 1880) and his son Charles (died 1866); and the fossil collector and palaeontologist George Bax Holmes (1803-87) and his wife Mary (died 1876). Bax Holmes is famous for his discovery of the Great Horsham Iguanodon in 1840 whose bones were the model for some of the dinosaurs of 1852-4 in Crystal Palace Park, Sydenham. Both headstones are of a pointed-arch shape, rather than the round-arched or segmental shape usually found in Quaker burial grounds.

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house is located near the centre of Horsham, near the library, bus station and the Forum shopping centre. The meeting house is set back from the road, behind brick boundary walls and the front garden (the former burial ground). Further northeast on the same side of the road are several listed houses from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

2.6. Listed status

The meeting house is correctly listed at grade II. The list entry (see Part 6) needs to be amended as it has a wrong date (repeating the date in *The Buildings of England*).

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

There was a sixteenth-century cottage on the plot close to the street. An earlier meeting house was located to the rear of the site (demolished in 1786). As it also contains a burial ground, the site has high 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): Optimal/generally satisfactory

3.2. Maintenance

The most recent quinquennial inspection was undertaken in 2012 by Simon Dyson of HMDW Architects. Most of the recommended repairs have been made. The meeting has

enough money for day-to-day maintenance. For major works it has access to the funds of the area meeting.

3.3. Sustainability

The meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit. It has implemented some measures to reduce its environmental impact and is considering others. These include:

- Climate change & energy efficiency: installation of more efficient heating
- Resource use, recycling & waste management: improved recycling
- Building maintenance & refurbishment: refurbishment completed

The meeting does not have an Energy Performance Certificate.

3.4. Amenities

The meeting has all the amenities it needs. These are all in the meeting house. There is a resident Warden, who lives in the attached cottage.

The meeting is accessible by public transport. There is no parking on site and no secure parking for bicycles.

3.5. Access

The meeting house has limited access for people with disabilities. There are two steps up from the pavement to the garden and five steps into the meeting room. There is no accessible toilet and there are limited facilities for partially-sighted people. There is a hearing loop. A Disability Access Audit was conducted in 2003 and some of its recommendations have been implemented.

3.6 Community Use

Friends use the meeting house for 4 hours per week. The building is available for community lettings for a maximum number of 160 hours per week. It is used for an average of 45-50 hours per week. The meeting has a lettings policy. Users whose aims are not in line with Quaker ethos are refused. Only Quaker-related groups are granted free use. Users value the meeting house for its central location, peaceful and spiritual atmosphere, light and bright space, competitive rates and door-code access.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

There are no signs of general crime or anti-social behaviour at the site. Incidents at the site include rubbish being thrown over the garden wall, and one incident where a stone was thrown through a window (which was reported to police). 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

The second phase of the refurbishment and repair works include the planned installation of secondary glazing.

Part 4: Impact of Change

4.1. To what extent is the building amenable or vulnerable to change?

- As a Meeting House used only by the local Meeting:* As a listed building, any alterations would need to be carefully considered and sympathetically designed. The meeting currently has all the required amenities.

ii) *For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use:* The meeting house is well-used by community groups, despite having no level access into the building.

iii) *Being laid down as a Meeting:* In the unlikely event of closure, the building could easily continue in community use with the cottage in residential use (possibly by a caretaker).

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. CUSTODIAN'S COTTAGE ATTACHED TO THE NORTH OF FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE

List entry Number: 1353961

Location

FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE. CUSTODIAN'S COTTAGE ATTACHED TO THE NORTH OF FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE, WORTHING ROAD

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

County	District	District Type	Parish
West Sussex	Horsham	District Authority	

Grade: II

Date first listed: 26-Jul-1974

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: 298208

List entry Description

Details

WORTHING ROAD 1. 1236 (West Side) Friends' Meeting House. Custodian's Cottage attached to the north of Friends' Meeting House. TQ 1630 1/153 II 2. 1834. Small single-storey building. Red brick. Moulded brick eaves cornice. Hipped tiled roof. 2 large round-headed windows. Later porch. Inside a pair of round-headed 3-panel doors, middle panels removed for glazing. Cottage of 2 storeys and 1 window attached to north. Sash windows, glazing bars intact. Hood on brackets over door.

Listing NGR: TQ1684830553