

Friends Meeting House, Ilkley

Queens Road, Ilkley, LS29 9QJ

National Grid Reference: SE 11650 47319



Statement of Significance

The meeting house has medium heritage significance, as a Victorian building which was remodelled in the late 1960s and sensitively extended in 2000-1. The aesthetic character of the building reflects the local vernacular and makes a positive contribution to the conservation area.

Evidential value

This is a purpose-built structure, built on land formerly owned by the Middleton family. Its archaeological and evidential value is low.

Historical value

The meeting house retains some of its historic internal layout but most of the fittings have been removed or covered over. The building has medium historical value.

Aesthetic value

The meeting house has medium aesthetic value, it is a good example of local Victorian architecture, designed by well-regarded architects and retains much of its exterior detail. The interior of the meeting house has been diminished slightly by twentieth century alterations, but the recent extension is well-designed. The building makes a positive contribution to the conservation area.

Communal value

The site remains in primarily Quaker use, but is also a valued community resource being used by a local nursery. The building has high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

1.1 Area Meeting: *Leeds*

1.2 Property Registration Number: 0019630

1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*

1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Bradford Metropolitan District Authority*

1.5 Historic England locality: *Yorkshire and the Humber*

1.6 Civil parish: *Ilkley*

1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*

1.8 NHLE: *Not applicable*

1.9 Conservation Area: *Ilkley*

1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*

1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*

1.12 Date(s): *1869; 2000-1*

1.13 Architect (s): *Maxwell and Tuke of Bury and Bradford; Paul Foxley of Foxley Architects*

1.14 Date of visit: *16 March 2016*

1.15 Name of report author: *Emma Neil*

1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Martin Ford, Oliver Pickering and Brian Sayer*

1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *Not applicable*

1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*

1.19 Information sources:

Dorothy Bohlmann, Notes on the history of Ilkley Meeting, 1969

David M. Butler, The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain (London: Friends Historical Society, 1999), vol. II, pp. 806.

Peter Leach and Nikolaus Pevsner, The Buildings of England: Yorkshire West Riding ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), pp.340.

Oliver Pickering, The Early History of Ilkley Quaker Meeting, 2016

Helen E. Roberts, Researching Yorkshire Quaker History: A Guide to Sources, University of Hull, 2003, pp. 49.

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

2.1. Historical background

The First Publishers of Truth, William Dewsbury, Christopher Taylor and Gervases Benson preached in the West Riding area during the early 1650s. Following their visit to Bolton-in-Craven a number of new meetings were settled in the area, one of which was Beamsley. Friends travelled to this new meeting from Bolton, Addingham and Beamsley. A meeting house was built in 1689 and the meeting was known as Farfield. By 1816, a decline in membership resulted in Friends renting premises in Addingham and the meeting was renamed Farfield and Addingham. At this time Ilkley was a small village; its later growth was associated with Ilkley's role as a dormitory town for Bradford and Leeds, and the construction of the railway. Following the closure of Addingham Meeting in 1862 the Ilkley Meeting was settled from Addingham Meeting, where Friends would meet in rented premises. It was during this time that the estate of the Middleton family was sold which allowed for a plot of land on Queens Road to be purchased in 1868 for a new meeting house. The meeting house was designed by Messrs Maxwell & Tuke of Bury and Bradford and cost approximately £1,200.

A description of the building is included in Bohlmann (1969):

The accommodation comprises a meeting room, with gallery to seat 200 persons. The ceiling is of plaster, slightly panelled with ornamental ring and sunlight in the centre. The whole woodwork inside is slightly varnished and has a very simple and chaste appearance...(May 27 1869)

The meeting house was unchanged until 1957 when a false ceiling was introduced concealing the original gallery and further alterations were made in 1968 to the caretaker's house, to incorporate it into the meeting house. This allowed for the creation of an enlarged lobby area, a library, new cloakrooms and two class rooms on the first floor. In 1973, architect James H Ashcroft of Leeds undertook a feasibility study for the meeting, to consider an extension to the west for a library and play room and also a flat above the main meeting room. None of these proposals were implemented.

The needs of the Meeting were changing by the beginning of the twenty-first century when there was a requirement for flexible space. Alterations were made to the former caretaker's living quarters and an extension was built in 2000-1 to provide a garden room with new kitchen facilities, to the designs of Paul Foxley R.I.B.A..

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The meeting house was built in 1869 to the designs of Messrs Maxwell and Tuke of Bury and Bradford in a gothic revival style and extended in 2000-1 by Paul Foxley. The meeting house is roughly T-plan and is built using coursed squared stone, with ashlar dressings to windows, coped verges, cornices and kneelers. The pitched roofs are covered in Welsh grey slate and the extension to the south-east is flat roofed with felt. The main entrance faces north towards Queens Road; with the gable end of the main meeting room, flanked by two projecting gabled wings; two storey former caretaker's cottage to the east and a single storey former schoolroom to the west. Connecting the two wings in front of the central gable is a lobby area beneath a lean-to roof. The central entrance doorway has a moulded stone surround and columns with foliated caps. Either side of the entrance are sash windows with stone moulded surrounds (one sash has been replaced), and the gable to the meeting room has a stone rose window in the apex. The east and west wing gable ends each have paired ground floor

windows (formerly sashes) with a central column with foliated caps, with a 3-light mullioned on the first floor of the east wing. The south elevation of the west wing has a 2-light mullioned window with a small flat roofed outbuilding in front. The south end of the east wing has a 2-light window at first floor level. The 2001 extension abuts the ground floor; designed in a contemporary style this has full height windows to the south and glass blocks to the east, with a projecting feature wall finished in render coloured blue that extends to the patio area.

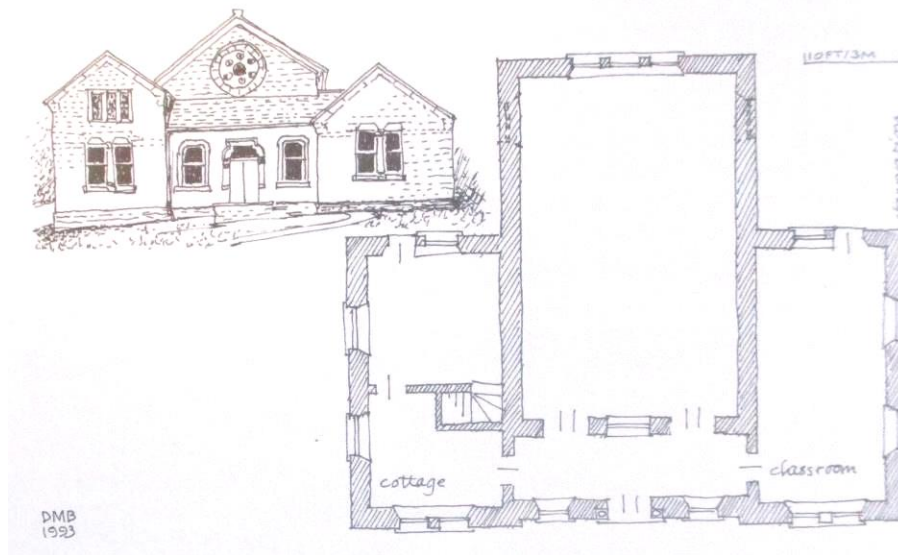


Figure 1: Ground floor plan (not to scale) and perspective
(Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol. 2, p. 806)

The east elevation of the two-storey former caretaker's cottage in the east wing has two 1-light windows either side of a fire exit door. The west elevation of the former school room has two window openings. The side elevations to the central meeting room range have three 1-light windows to the west and one 1-light window to the east, which once lit the gallery area. The rear gable of the main meeting room has a triple window to the upper level, with an inserted triple window below, also providing a rear doorway.

Internally, the entrance leads into a lobby area providing access to the WC facilities and the library. The library is lit by a large window to the north wall facing towards the lobby area, which according to Butler's observations was once a door opening. This room provides access to the 2001 garden room extension, the main meeting room and the staircase to the first floor. The main meeting room is well lit from the windows to the south, the walls are plastered and plainly painted. The floor is laid with vinyl and the room has a tiled suspended ceiling. The northwest corner of the room features a slight projection which provides access to the store room and former school room which now provides facilities for the nursery, including basic kitchen facilities. On the east wall is an alternative entrance into the 2001 extension known as the garden room, which provides a light, modern and airy meeting room. Above the suspended ceiling in the main meeting room is a large unused space which still retains the original sloping ceiling with plaster panel mouldings and the roof truss.



Figure 2: Upper level of the main meeting room (Brian Sawley, 2009)

2.3. Loose furnishings

Throughout the meeting house, there are open-backed pine benches with turned front legs, dating from the nineteenth century.



Figure 3: Open-backed pine bench

2.4. Attached burial ground

Not applicable.

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

Ilkley is located 12 miles north of Bradford and 17 miles northwest of Leeds. The meeting house is located in Ilkley Conservation Area designated in 1971. Queens Road is predominately residential, many of the buildings date from the Victorian and Edwardian era and are built in a Gothic style using local stone. The main characteristics are two-storey

gable-fronted properties with some properties containing belvedere towers. The northern side of Queens Road includes residential properties dating from the late twentieth century. The grounds of the properties are well planted with trees and planting which add to the mature landscaped character of the area.

The meeting house is elevated and set back from the road, with a ramped path leading to the entrance, with a steel handrail. The gardens to the north and south of the property are well maintained and mainly feature low level planting with some trees. The site is bounded by a low stone wall with weathered stone copings and gate piers located to the northeast corner. The meeting house makes a positive contribution to the historic character of the conservation area.

2.6. Listed status

Not listed. Internally, the meeting house has been much altered and is therefore not considered to be a future candidate for listing, but it may merit inclusion on a local list for its historic and architectural value.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

The West Yorkshire Archaeological Advisory Service was consulted and no Historic Environment Records are associated with the site. No former buildings were present on the site prior to the present meeting house being built. Overall, the archaeological potential of the site is considered 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 last quinquennial inspection took place in May 2015 by Sebastian Rowe R.I.B.A of Pearce Bottomley Architects. The report found the building to be generally in good condition. The following recommendations from the quinquennial inspection have been undertaken: cleaning of gutters and overhanging vegetation. During 2016 various small works have been prioritised for completion by the Ilkley Meeting Premises Committee. The meeting has sufficient funds to maintain and repair the building, with support from the Area Meeting Building the Futures Fund. The Friends do not have a five-year maintenance and repair plan for the building but undertake repair and maintenance in accordance with the quinquennial report.

3.3. Sustainability

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

- Climate change and energy efficiency: refurbishment of roofs, new improved heating system, dry wall insulation in play group kitchen, increased loft insulation throughout the meeting house, LED lighting in main meeting room and replacement of several windows.

- Building maintenance & refurbishment: Complete redecoration and damp proofing.
- Resource use, recycling and waste management: use of council recycling scheme.
- Wildlife, ecology and nature conservation: the grounds are well planted with trees and shrubs which provide wildlife habitats. Areas of grass under trees are un-mowed.
- Transport: the meeting participated in the Area Meeting travel to Meeting survey.

3.4. Amenities

The meeting house has all the amenities it needs, a modern kitchen, social room, two first floor small rooms, a large multi-purpose meeting room, library, separate male and female toilets (including one fully accessible). There is no resident warden. No on-site car parking is available but ample on street car parking is available. There is no secure bicycle parking available however Friends are able to use front railings to secure bicycles if required. The meeting house is served by a local bus service and is a ten minute walk from Ilkley railway station.

3.5. Access

The meeting house is accessible to people with disabilities. The path to the entrance is ramped and there is level access on the ground floor, an accessible toilet, and a hearing loop have been installed. Without a lift, access to the first floor is restricted. At present there are no facilities for the partially-sighted but in the near future yellow edge strips are to be painted onto the outside steps. A Disability Access Audit has not been conducted.

3.6 Community Use

Friends use the meeting house for about 2.5 hours per week. The building is theoretically available for community lettings for a maximum number of 57 hours per week. It is used for an average of 32 hours per week. The meeting has a formal lettings policy. Quakers are able to use the meeting house for free. Whilst the meeting house is available for hire, there is limited availability as the building is used on a regular basis by the Ilkley pre-school playgroup. Bookings cannot take place on weekday mornings during term time, Sunday mornings or Thursday and Friday afternoons. Users value the building for its calm pleasant surroundings, quiet, good value, accessibility and rear garden.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

No heritage crime has been recorded, and the area is generally well cared-for and has low levels of crime and deprivation. The Friends have not developed a liaison with the Local Neighbourhood Policing Team but would consider making contact in the future.

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?

i) As a Meeting House used only by the local Meeting: The meeting house has already been altered and extended in 2001. At present it fulfils the needs of the Meeting. As an unlisted building there are no heritage constraints on future change to the interior, although the conservation area designation restricts external alterations, particularly to the attractive main front.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: Although primarily a Quaker meeting house, the building's main user is a pre-school nursery and they have all the required facilities, at present.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House: It would seem unlikely that the meeting house would be laid down as considerable investment has been made to improve the facilities of the meeting house. In the regrettable event of closure, a new use should be found as the building is an attractive feature in the conservation area; the most obvious new owner would be the nursery which is already the main user of the building.

Part 5: Category: 3