

Friends Meeting House, Kettering

Northhall Street, Kettering, NN16 8DS

National Grid Reference: SP 86468 78982



Statement of Significance

A small red brick meeting house built in 1869 on the foundations of an older meeting house and enlarged in 1903. Behind the meeting house is a burial ground which was in use from the 1730s. Both the exterior and the interior of the building have seen some alteration but the building is still of medium heritage significance overall.

Evidential value

As the meeting house is said to be built on the foundations of its predecessor, the building must be considered to be of high evidential value.

Historical value

As a reasonably well preserved example of a mid-nineteenth century Quaker meeting house, the building is of medium historical value.

Aesthetic value

Despite various alterations the interior especially preserves something of its earlier character and the building is of medium aesthetic value.

Communal value

There has been a Quaker meeting in a building on this site more or less continuously since 1732 and the present building is also used by other community groups and is of high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Northamptonshire*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0031710*
- 1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Kettering Borough Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *East Midlands*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Kettering*
- 1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*
- 1.8 NHLE: *Not applicable*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *No*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *1868; 1903; 2000-1*
- 1.13 Architect (s): *Not established; NE; Maurice Walton of Stimpson Walton Bond*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *15 January 2016*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Neil Burton*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *William Walford*
- 1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *Detached burial ground at Winwick, NGR TL 10297 80642*
- 1.18 Attached burial ground: *Yes*
- 1.19 Information sources:
Butler, D.M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol.1 pp.467-8
Whitehouse, Ruth, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Northamptonshire* (1997)
Local Meeting survey by William Walford, September 2015

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

2.1. Historical background

A meeting was established at Kettering in 1668 and the first meeting house was acquired in 1706 but its location is unclear. A site in Northall (now Northall Street) was acquired in 1732 for a burial ground, but it also contained a cottage which may have been used as a meeting house. A new stone meeting house was built on this site in 1769 but in 1869 it was replaced by a larger brick meeting house, partly on the same foundations. This building contained a main and women's meeting room. As Adult School work developed at the end of the century the meeting house was enlarged in 1903 to provide an additional room and ancillary spaces including a kitchen with a new entrance west of the original main front. Some internal

refurbishment was carried out in the mid 1980s. More substantial alterations were made in 2001 when the original 1860s porch was removed and a new room doubling as an entrance lobby and library was added to the south west corner of the building. The architect for this work was Maurice Walton. The setting of the meeting house has changed very considerably in the later twentieth century, with the demolition of a factory building to the north and its replacement with housing and with the widening of adjacent roads. To the right of the meeting house is a modern car wash, which stands on land once owned by Trustees on behalf of Friends. There were also two cottages here in the same ownership.

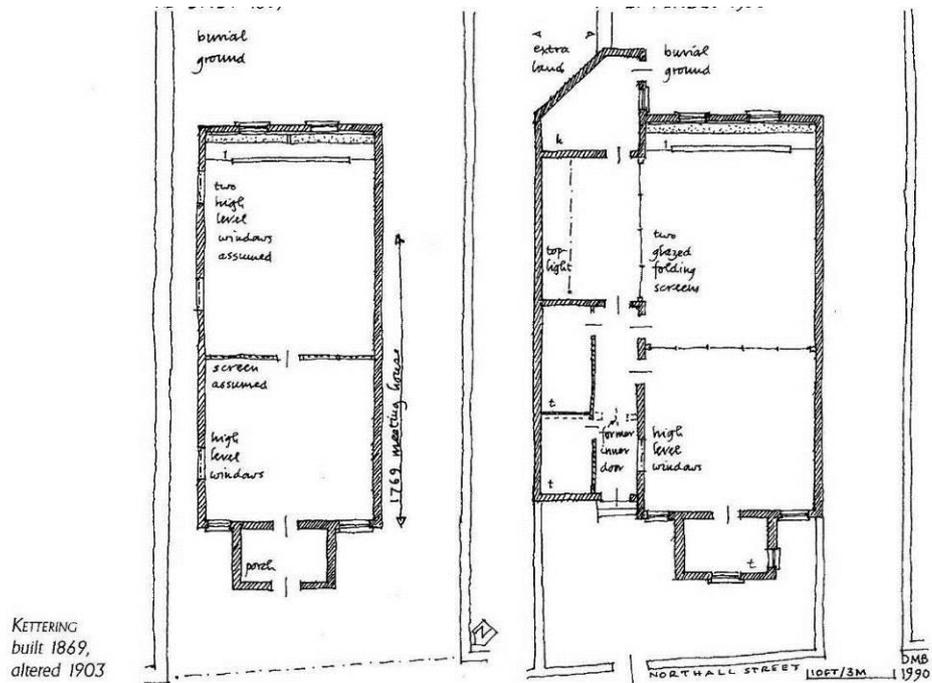


Fig.1 The plan of the 1869 building (left), with the plan as altered c1903 (right) Butler 1999 vol.1 p.468. North is at the top of the plan.



Fig.2 Paintings of the exterior and interior of the meeting house c1980 by Nina Carroll (from originals in the building).

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The meeting house of 1869 was a long rectangle on plan with a porch at the north end. This is still the main body of the building, with walls of red brick laid in English bond and a pitched roof is covered in welsh slate. On the west side the roof is swept down over the full-length single-storey addition made in 1903, which also has red brick walls, with a long dormer window in the roof slope. The entrance lobby/library addition at the south west corner is largely glazed, with a pitched hipped slated roof. The original main (south) front to the road has a single window to the right, the modern entrance lobby to the left, and a stone quatrefoil in the gable. The original brick porch below the quatrefoil has been removed. The east side wall is wholly plain, apart from a single dash window towards the southern end. The north wall has two sash windows, extended downwards with new sills, presumably when the minister's stand within was removed.

Internally, the original 1903 side entrance is preserved and opens into a tiled corridor with toilets and kitchen opening off it. The main meeting room at the north end of the building and has a timber panelled dado, ramped up at the north end for the stand, which has been removed. The walls are plain-plastered, with a moulded timber cornice and a coved plaster ceiling. Full-height, part-glazed timber folding screens on the south and west sides open to the former women's meeting room and another smaller room.

2.3. Loose furnishings

There are no loose furnishings of heritage interest.

2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

The rectangular burial ground behind the present meeting house has been in use since 1732. It is enclosed by the brick and stone walls of adjoining properties. The burial ground is no longer open for interments and is now laid to grass and used as a garden. The headstones were moved to the sides in 1990. There are five trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house stands on the northern edge of Kettering and now overlooks a busy road intersection and a large Morrisons Supermarket. The meeting is associated with a detached burial ground at Winwick (NGR TL 10297 80642)

2.6. Listed status

The meeting house is not a candidate for the statutory list nor, probably, for any local list, mainly on account of the large number of alterations to the nineteenth century structure.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

The early history of the site is unknown but it has been in use by Quakers since 1732 and should be considered as being of medium 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): Generally satisfactory but with one minor localised problem. The boundary wall at the south end of the burial ground is incomplete and the breach is presently filled with a damaged hurdle. It is intended to repair the wall in 2016.

3.2. Maintenance

The last Quinquennial inspection was made in July 2014 (no copy attached). The more important recommended items are being attended to. There is no 5-year maintenance plan, but there is a premises and gardening committee to look after the fabric.

3.3. Sustainability

The meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit. The feasibility of installing solar panels was investigated recently but the situation of the building was not suitable. Waste is recycled. The building does not have an EPC.

3.4. Amenities

The meeting has all the amenities it needs in the meeting house. There are three meeting rooms, plus a kitchen and toilets, one of which is adapted for disabled persons. There is no resident warden.

The meeting house is on the edge of the central shopping area with large public parking areas nearby. There is on-site parking for a maximum of two cars. Kettering railway station is 15 minutes walk away.

3.5 Access

All the ground floor rooms are accessible. There is an accessible WC, a hearing loop installed and facilities for partially-sighted people. A Disability Access Audit has not been carried out.

3.6 Community Use

Friends use the building for about 2 hours per week. The building is available for community lettings for a about 78 hours per week and is used for approximately 39 hours per week. The meeting has a lettings policy. Betting, gaming, commercial activities and party political meetings are not allowed. Free hire is offered to groups run by a member of the meeting.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

There has been some minor general crime. The building was entered and minor damage caused though nothing was stolen. There has also been some heritage crime; lead was stripped from a roof about two years ago. In both cases the police were informed. The lead has been replaced with ubiflex, the meeting house has been smart watered and other precautions have been taken against burglary.

3.8. Plans for change

There are no 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 building has already seen several changes. There is probably some scope for further minor alteration, subject to the usual consents.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: as above, there may be scope for minor alterations, subject to planning constraints.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House: the building could doubtless find another use if the meeting were laid down, though the burial ground with its headstones should be preserved.

Part 5: Category: 3