

Friends Meeting House, Kings Lynn

38 Bridge Street, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 5AB

National Grid Reference: TF 61881 19560



Statement of Significance

The meeting house building has high heritage significance as a late seventeenth or early eighteenth-century building which was an inn for most of its life, acquired by the Quakers in 1986 and adapted for meetings.

Evidential value

The building is known to be partly constructed of reclaimed mediaeval materials, perhaps from the nearby Carmelite Priory, and may stand on the site of earlier medieval structures on what was once a main thoroughfare. The building retains some (nineteenth century) decorative features from its time as a pub. It is of high evidential value.

Historical value

The building is of medium historical value as an old structure, known to have been an inn since at least the 1730s. Its use as a meeting house is recent and this aspect has low historical value.

Aesthetic value

The rendered exterior of the building is characteristic of historic buildings in the area and it forms part of an attractive group on the west side of Bridge Street. It is of high aesthetic value.

Communal value

As a place of public refreshment for nearly three hundred years, and now as a place of worship also offering space for community activities the building has high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Norfolk and Waveney*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0024430*
- 1.3 Owner: *Friends Trusts Ltd*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *East of England*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Kings Lynn*
- 1.7 Listed status: *II*
- 1.8 NHLE: *1195341*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *Kings Lynn*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *early-mid eighteenth century, meeting room extension 2014*
- 1.13 Architect(s): *Original builder not known; extension by John Stephenson*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *27 June 2014*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Neil Burton*
- 1.16 Name of contact made on site: *George Gawlinski*
- 1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *detached burial ground behind Buckingham Terrace in London Road, Kings Lynn*
- 1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*
- 1.19 Information sources:

Butler, D.M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol. 1, pp. 443–4
Norfolk HRE ref. NHER 469453

Local Meeting survey by George Gawlinski, 2014 and 2015

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

2.1 Historical background

Friends were meeting in Kings Lynn by 1655 and acquired their first meeting house c1700. This 'old meeting house' was superseded by the purchase in 1774 of a property in New Conduit Street, where a new meeting house was built in that year. The 'new meeting house' was sold to Hull Corporation in 1945 and demolished in 1970 as part of an Urban Improvement programme. In 1986 the Friends bought the former Hulk Inn, an early-eighteenth-century building, which had ceased trading as a pub in 1970. It was converted to provide a meeting house and opened in that year (conversion by Peter Codling). A small extension to enlarge the meeting room was built in 2014.

The burial grounds associated with the old and new meeting houses have both been 'obliterated by development' (Butler). A third burial ground, of 200 sq. yds., was at South Square but was disused by 1843 and is presumed lost. A fourth was bequeathed c1702 by Thomas Buckingham, to be used also for the grazing of visiting Friends' horses. This survives but is not in use.

2.2 The building and its principal fittings and furnishings

The building is 'L'-shaped, with a two-storey central block and lower single storey wings extending to north and west. The walls are now covered with ashlar render. When the render was removed for repairs in 2009, it was revealed that the walls of both ranges incorporate some early brick and stone, possibly re-used from St Mary's Carmelite Priory whose gateway survives nearby, and also that the north range had been raised at some time in the past. The roofs are covered in plain tiles. The main (east) elevation to Bridge Street has the principal door on the right hand side of the two-storey block, under a shallow hood on shaped brackets. In the centre of the front the ground floor has a three-light timber window with shaped heads to the lights; the first floor has a large paned rectangular sash with similar shaped heads. To the left of the windows is a second much plainer door opening. The single-storey north range has two three-light timber windows. The return elevation to the south has small modern casements on both floors and hipped-roof dormers in both roof slopes.

The meeting room is in the lower north range of the building, which was recently extended at the rear in red brick under a catslide roof, with a single large opening to the rear courtyard.. The interior has been opened-out. The meeting room is a wholly modern space with one old door which has the words 'Smoking Room' in the glazing. The principal ground floor space in the south range is another meeting area with plain bridging beams exposed in the ceiling. The main roof structure is a late clasped purlin example. Behind the meeting house is a small rear courtyard with a small shed or coachhouse.

2.3 Loose furnishings

There are no loose furnishings of heritage interest.

2.4 Attached burial ground

None

2.5 The meeting house in its wider setting

Bridge Street was originally the main road from the South Gate into Lynn before the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is now a cul-de-sac on the southern edge of the town with a row of pleasant eighteenth century terraced houses on one side (together with the elaborate Jacobean front of the II*Greenland Fisheries Building) a large area of public housing on the other and derelict open land to the south. London Road, with the detached burial ground, is a short distance to the west.

2.6 Listed status

The building is appropriately listed at grade II as a modest eighteenth-century structure built partly from reclaimed mediaeval building materials. It also makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

2.7 Archaeological potential of the site

This part of King's Lynn was inhabited from the mediaeval period, so it is probable that there will be some below-ground archaeological deposits, depending on the degree of disturbance. It has medium archaeological potential.

Part 3: Current use and management

See completed volunteer survey

3.1 Condition

- i) Meeting house: Good, partly as a result of the recent works.
- ii) Attached burial ground: N/A

3.2 Maintenance

The last quinquennial inspection took place in 2014 and was carried out by a suitably qualified person (name not supplied). The meeting has enough money to maintain and repair the meeting house. It has a five-year maintenance and repair plan.

3.3 Sustainability

The meeting uses the Sustainability Toolkit and has implemented measures to reduce its environmental impact. These include:

- Climate change & energy efficiency: insulation improved
- Building maintenance & refurbishment: substantial structural repairs
- Transport: bike racks have been installed

The meeting does not have an Energy Performance Certificate but might consider obtaining one.

3.4 Amenities

The meeting house has all the required amenities. There is no resident warden. The meeting house is accessible by public transport. There is no car parking on-site but there is parking for bikes.

3.5 Access

It is accessible to all. It has level access, an accessible WC, a hearing loop, and facilities for the partially sighted. A Disability Access Audit was last carried out in 1988 and the accessible WC was subsequently installed.

3.6 Community use

Friends use the meeting house for 4 hours per week. The building is theoretically available for community lettings for a maximum number of 80 hours per week. It is used for an average of 40 hours per week. The meeting has a lettings policy and the meeting house is generally let to local community groups. Free of charge use has to be agreed by the meeting. Users value the meeting house for its convenience, suitability and friendliness.

3.7 Vulnerability to crime

The area has high crime levels and the meeting house has suffered from heritage crime. There are signs of crime and/or anti-social behaviour on the site. (However, no details were included in the information provided by the meeting.) There is no established liaison with the Local Neighbourhood Policing Team but the meeting might consider making contact.

3.8 Plans for change

There are no plans for changes to the building at present (2015).

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 room is wholly modern and could be changed if required.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: the building already hosts several secular uses and was designed to do so.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting: the building has been in secular use for most of its life and reversion would not be harmful to its character

Part 5: Category: 3

Part 6: List description

Name: RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE

List entry Number: 1195341

Location

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, 38, BRIDGE STREET

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

County	District	District Type	Parish
Norfolk	King's Lynn and West Norfolk		District Authority

Grade: II

Date first listed: 07-Jun-1972

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

KING'S LYNN

TF6119NE BRIDGE STREET 610-1/9/25 (West side) 07/06/72 No.38 Religious Society of Friends Meeting House

GV II

Public House, now Religious meeting rooms and domestic quarters. Early C18, altered late C18, altered and restored 1967. Brick, rendered and colourwashed. Plain tile roofs. 2 storeys and attic 2 ranges. South range with double-leaf glazed public house door to right under a hood on consoles. One 3-light casement to left with arched lights, and a similar 2-light window above. C19 public house door to left of elevation. Gabled roof, hipped to south. Internal north gable-end stack. South roof slope with one C20 hipped dormer. North range of one storey and attic, lit through two 3-light casements with arched lights to front. Gable-end entered through an attic hay-loft door. Cross wing to rear. INTERIOR opened out. Plain bridging beams in ground-floor rooms. Main roof structure is a late clasped purlin example.

Listing NGR: TF6188119560