

Friends Meeting House, Leyburn

7 Grove Square, Leyburn, DL8 5AE

National Grid Reference: SE 11117 90651



Statement of Significance

The meeting house has medium heritage significance as a Victorian domestic building which was converted for use as a meeting house in the 1980s.

Evidential value

The meeting house has an overall low level of significance for evidential value. The North Yorkshire County Council Historic Environment Record has not identified the site for any archaeological interest.

Historical value

Little is known about the builders or architect of 7 Grove Square and there is little information about the former occupiers of the building. As a typical nineteenth century building built in the local vernacular and converted for Quaker use in 1980s, it has medium historical value.

Aesthetic value

The meeting house has medium aesthetic value. It is an attractive nineteenth century domestic building which retains much of its original external architectural detail. It makes a positive contribution to the conservation area.

Communal value

The building has been in use as a Quaker meeting house since 1984 and a venue for community groups. The meeting house has medium communal value.

Part 1: Core data

1.1 Area Meeting: *Wensleydale & Swaledale*

1.2 Property Registration Number: *0032460*

1.3 Owner: *Wensleydale & Swaledale Quaker Trust*

1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Richmondshire District Council*

1.5 Historic England locality: *Yorkshire*

1.6 Civil parish: *Leyburn*

1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*

1.8 NHLE: *Not applicable*

1.9 Conservation Area: *Leyburn*

1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*

1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*

1.12 Date(s): *Nineteenth century*

1.13 Architect (s): *Not established*

1.14 Date of visit: *7 April 2016*

1.15 Name of report author: *Emma Neil*

1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Edna Rossiter*

1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *Not applicable*

1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*

1.19 Information sources:

David M. Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1999), vol. II, pp. 744.

June Hall, *Step by Step round Quaker Sites in Wensleydale*, Unicorn Projects: Leyburn, 2001.

Helen E. Roberts, *Researching Yorkshire Quaker History: A Guide to Sources*, University of Hull, 2003, pp. 54.

Jan Reed, *Local Meeting Survey*, January 2016.

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

2.1. Historical background

The beginnings of Quakerism in Leyburn coincide with visits by the First Publishers of Truth, Gervase Benson and John Blayking. In 1653 a meeting was settled and at the time was known as Coverdale meeting. Friends met in each other's homes and records identify early meetings taking place at Richard Geldart's, who converted to Quakerism following preaching by Richard Robinson of Counterset. The meeting name was changed to Leyburn at some time between 1704 and 1738. By 1738 the meeting had ceased and in 1796 Friends from Richmond and Swaledale meetings began to meet in Leyburn. This too was short lived and the meeting once again closed in 1821, with the remaining Friends joining the Aysgarth meeting.

Aysgarth and Carperby meetings combined during the nineteenth century and a meeting house was built in 1864. The name of the meeting varied between Aysgarth, Carperby or both, but by 1967 was known as Aysgarth meeting. The Friends of this meeting began to meet in Leyburn from 1984 following the closure of the Carperby meeting house. A decision was made by the Friends to purchase 7 Grove Square, a nineteenth century semi-detached house to serve Friends in Lower Wensleydale and Swaledale, Richmond, Bedale and district. The house was altered for Quaker use. In c2000 work was undertaken to dry-line the west wall of the meeting room and remove the chimney breast (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Removal of chimney breast c2000 (Leyburn MH Archive).

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The meeting house was built as a two-storey semi-detached dwelling in the late nineteenth century. It is built in coursed stone, with carved stone corbels, ashlar stone dressings and quoins. The pitched roof is laid in Welsh slate. The principal elevation faces south and the ground floor has a canted bay window with sash windows. The entrance to the east of the bay has a 6-panelled door with rectangular over-light and stone lintel. The first floor has two sash windows; like the ground floor, these have smaller panes to upper sash, with stone sills and lintels. The west elevation is blind with a red brick chimney stack in the gable wall. The north rear elevation has two sash windows with the same detailing as those to the south elevation. Abutting the main building is a shallower pitched projection aligned north to south and a further shallower building (outbuilding) abuts this.

The lobby leads into a small corridor with doorways to rooms off the hall with simple moulded architraves and 4-panelled doors, which lead to the main meeting room to the west,

ancillary facilities to the north and the staircase to the first floor. The staircase has a turned newel post with ball finials and turned balusters. The main meeting was formerly two rooms, combined by removing the dividing wall to provide a larger meeting space. The walls are papered and plainly painted, with moulded ceiling cornice and the floor is covered in carpet. The ceilings are plastered with two ceiling roses. The chimney breast was removed in c2000, leaving the upper section on corbels. The room is well lit from the bay to the south and from a window to the north. The rear of the room to the north provides access to the ancillary facilities. The first floor contains two meeting rooms and ancillary facilities to the north end.

2.3. Loose furnishings

The meeting house contains a clock from Carperby meeting house which was relocated to Leyburn following the closure of the former meeting house in the 1980s.



Figure 2: Clock from Carperby meeting house

2.4. Attached burial ground

Not applicable.

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

Leyburn is a market town located at the east end of Wensleydale in the Yorkshire Dales, and is approximately 17 miles east of Hawes. The meeting house is located within Grove Square which consists of mainly residential properties and provides a visually important setting to several of the town's more important buildings, within the Leyburn Conservation Area. To the west of the meeting house is the Grade II listed Grove Hotel dating from 1757 and to the east is the Grade II listed 4 and 5 Grove Square dating from the mid eighteenth century.

The meeting house is bounded by a small stone wall to the south of the property which is shared with the adjoining property with a hedge between the two front gardens. To the rear of the property there is a tall stone wall to the west and hedges to the east. A large garden with planting is located to the north of the meeting house along with a small area for parking.

2.6. Listed status

Not listed and not considered a future candidate for listing.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

The meeting house was built in the late nineteenth century as a dwelling and it is not known whether it replaced an earlier building. Its archaeological potential is 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 October 2015, undertaken by Jon Steel MRICS (chartered building surveyor). The report found the building to be generally in good condition. The Wensleydale and Swaledale Quaker Trust are currently devising a work plan to undertake the recommendations from the quinquennial inspection, and developing a five year maintenance and repair plan for the building. The meeting has sufficient funds to maintain and repair the building.

3.3. Sustainability

The Meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit. The following measures have been implemented to reduce its environmental impact. These include:

- Climate change and energy efficiency: installed central heating and insulation, switched to a green electricity supplier three years ago, have explored the potential of installing solar panels and ongoing energy management is discussed using the expertise of the Wensleydale and Swaledale Quaker Trust.
- Resource use, recycling and waste management: members and attenders regularly working to improve recycling and waste management.
- Wildlife, ecology and nature conservation: the grounds are well planted with trees and shrubs which provide wildlife habitats. The garden has areas for vegetable growing. Part of the lawn is left to grow during summer and dead foliage is not cleared until spring. The garden also has a bug hotel.
- Transport: Car sharing is encouraged.

3.4. Amenities

The meeting house has all the amenities it needs, including the main meeting room, kitchen and toilet facilities on both the ground and first floor along with two smaller meeting rooms on the first floor. There is no resident warden. An on-site car park is available for a small number of cars with additional car parking available in Grove Square, at the front of the meeting house. There is no secure parking for bicycles. The meeting house is served by a local bus service seven days a week. On a Sunday a bus service runs from Northallerton but no convenient return bus service. During the week services run from Northallerton, Hawes and Richmond with return journeys by mid-to late afternoon.

3.5. Access

The meeting house is accessible to people with disabilities, a ramp is located to the rear entrance door of the meeting house. There is level access into and throughout ground floor of the building with restricted access to the first floor. The meeting house has an accessible toilet and a hearing loop installed. There are currently no facilities for partially-sighted people. A Disability Access Audit was conducted in 2001, but the recommendations from the report were not available at the time of the survey.

3.6 Community Use

Friends use the meeting house for about 4 hours each week. The meeting house is theoretically available for community lettings for a maximum number of 70 hours per week and is used for an average of 10 hours each week. There are three rooms available to hire, the main meeting room and two smaller rooms on the first floor. The meeting has a formal lettings policy. Friends encourage the meeting house to be used for outreach and services to the community, subject to the needs of the Meeting and Quaker values. The meeting house is let mainly to charitable organisations but occasionally commercial lettings are acceptable. Rooms are not let for party political meetings, extremist groups or to any groups advocating violence. Requests for other religious groups and requests for continuous bookings are referred to the Meeting for consideration. Local Friends are encouraged to make use of the meeting house for their own activities including extension work, and to promote the use of the building by compatible organisations including those with educational, cultural and leisure interests. Users value the building for its peaceful location, warmth, well priced and good sized rooms.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

The meeting house has not been subject to anti-social behaviour or heritage crime. The locality is generally in an area which is well-cared for, has low crime levels, and high community confidence. 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

In the near future there are plans to improve the toilet and kitchen facilities on the first floor.

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 provides all the facilities the meeting needs at present. Scope for extensions is limited due to the tight boundary of the site and proposed alterations to the exterior must protect or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- ii) *For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use:* The building has all the amenities required by its current users. The Friends are looking into improving existing facilities.
- iii) *Being laid down as a Meeting House:* Should the meeting be laid down, the building could easily be converted back to full domestic use.

Part 5: Category: 3