

Friends Meeting House, Marsden

21 Walverden Road, Nelson, BB9 0PJ

National Grid Reference: SD 85651 36462



Statement of Significance

The building has medium heritage interest as an early twentieth century former school room, added onto the former meeting house of late eighteenth century date.

Evidential value

The present meeting house and attached former meeting house range is built of local materials in traditional style and retains evidence for the respective uses of the elements of the building. The building has medium evidential value.

Historical value

Friends were meeting in the area from the late seventeenth century and the present building has strong historical associations with local Quaker history and families such as the Ecroyds. The building expresses the ability of Friends to extend accommodation and educational services in the early twentieth century. The building is physically connected to the former meeting house and the two elements continue to be read as one building, however the present meeting house is of medium historical value.

Aesthetic value

The building is an interesting example of a design intended to create historical continuity in style with the earlier meeting house adjacent, with some contemporary details in the use of a decorative doorway. Inside, the original staircase has aesthetic value. Visually the building is read together with the attached former meeting house; the whole ensemble has high aesthetic value.

Communal value

The meeting house is important for Friends' use, but also acts as a local resource, offering rooms for community uses. It makes a very positive contribution to the character of the immediate area, adding historical depth and interest. It has medium communal value.

Part 1: Core data

1.1 Area Meeting: *Pendle Hill*

1.2 Property Registration Number: *0013530*

1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*

1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Pendle Borough Council*

1.5 Civil parish: *Brierfield*

1.6 Historic England locality: *North West*

1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*

1.8 NHLE: *N/A*

1.9 Conservation Area: *No*

1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*

1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*

1.12 Date(s): *1776, 1909*

1.13 Architect (s): *Haslam & Chapman*

1.14 Date of visit: *17 May 2015*

1.15 Name of report author: *Clare Hartwell*

1.16 Name of contact made on site: *Ian McHugh*

1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *The remains of an earlier meeting house survive nearby on Kings Causeway where there is a disused burial ground. Another burial ground associated with the meeting survives at Newhead, Halifax Road, Brierfield*

1.18 Attached burial ground: *Yes*

1.19 Information sources:

Butler, D. M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1999), vol. 1, pp. 324-326

Hartwell, C. & Pevsner, N., *The Buildings of England Lancashire: North* (Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 2009), p. 172

Lancashire Archives QSP/1324/13

<http://marsden.pendlehillquakers.org.uk/>

Anne Peason, *Local Meeting Survey*, March 2015

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

2.1. Historical background

A house at Marsden Heights was registered for Friends' meetings in 1689. It was superseded by a purpose-built meeting house erected on land made available by the Ecroyd family, and a licence for a meeting house was granted to Richard Ecroyd in 1734. This building was replaced by the present building in 1761-3; the previous meeting house was converted to five cottages, and was subject to later alterations, eventually forming a single house. This building appears to survive, in greatly altered condition, as No. 397 Kings Causeway, Marsden Heights. A disused burial ground is said to survive behind the property. The meeting house of 1761-3 originally had a stable, possibly a small detached building shown on a drawing dated 1886 (figure 1). Burials began in 1768 and additional land was bought for burials in 1833. By 1776 a schoolhouse had been created, probably within the building. The building was extended to provide more school accommodation and premises for a caretaker in 1909 to designs by the architects Haslam & Chapman of Bolton. A drawing with the practice name showing the new work survives in the Meeting archive, however Butler states that the work was done by the architects Shaw & Vowles. It is possible that there were two phases of work in the early twentieth century, giving rise to the confusion.



Figure 1 A wash drawing of the meeting house dated 1886, prior to building the 1909 schoolroom (Marsden Meeting)

The 1760s meeting house part of the building was sold in 1989 to a housing association, and the 1909 extension was retained for use as a meeting house. At this time alterations by the John Brunton Partnership created a flat on the upper floor and a meeting room with kitchen and toilet facilities on the ground floor.

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The meeting house is in a building erected in 1909, designed by architects Haslam & Chapman of Bolton as an addition to the 1760s meeting house (latter no longer in Quaker ownership). The building is constructed of watershot sandstone and has a Welsh slate roof, with a corbelled eaves course. It is of two storeys and three bays, attached at the north end of a linear range that includes the late eighteenth century meeting house to the south end. The front faces west. The original meeting house entrance has a stone surround with exaggerated keystone and pilasters, and stone mullioned or cross windows.

The present meeting house has an entrance in bay one from the south, embellished by a steep triangular pediment with a stylised keystone in Art Nouveau style. There is a tripartite stone stair window above it. Other windows are two-lights mullioned windows to match the earlier part of the building. The rear (east) side of the present meeting house is finished in pebbledash with late twentieth century windows.

The interior contains a repositioned early twentieth century stair at the south end, leading up to the flat. The meeting room, on the east side of the building, is divided from a corridor by a partition with two doors. There are WCs on the west side of the corridor and kitchen at the north end. All the work, apart from the stair, appears to be of 1989 date.

2.3. Loose furnishings

There are a few benches in the meeting house which are probably of nineteenth or early twentieth century date. Other furnishings are of late twentieth century date.

2.4. Attached burial ground

The attached burial ground survives on both sides of the building, enclosed by stone walls and retaining mature trees. Headstones have been removed at the front and have been re-set along the site boundary. A few *in situ* stones survive at the back of the building. The inscriptions, with dates between 1834 and 1978, were transcribed in 1981 and copies are available at Burnley and Colne libraries.



Figure 2. The burial ground with repositioned headstones.

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The rural Marsden area has been absorbed into the conurbation that spreads between Nelson and Brierfield, to the east of the M65 in north-east Lancashire. The building stands in what is now a largely residential area with housing of a variety of dates. There are a few scattered buildings probably of eighteenth century date, terraces of nineteenth century date, and a mixture of later housing including semi-detached 20th century houses. There is reported to be a detached burial ground at Newhead, off Halifax road, SD 853364. Another burial ground is reported behind the previous meeting house on Kings Causeway SD 863361.

2.6. Listed status

The building is not listed. The exterior of the whole building does have some architectural and historic interest, but as the interior of the meeting house is largely modern it would not meet designation criteria, but the whole building (including the late eighteenth century former meeting house) is a strong candidate for inclusion on a local list.

2.7 Archaeological potential

The 1760s building was probably erected on open farmland and the site has low archaeological potential for earlier periods, aside from the burial ground which has medium archaeological potential.

Part 3: Current use and management

3.1. Condition

- i) Meeting House: Good
- ii) Attached burial ground: Optimal/generally satisfactory.

3.2. Maintenance

There is no QI, but a guide to the care and maintenance of the property was produced in 1998 by R. Martin Seddon. This gives detailed advice concerning the maintenance of the building and sources of funds which is used to guide decisions about maintenance.

3.3. Sustainability

The meeting uses the Sustainability Toolkit and has implemented the following measures:

- Installation of an energy-efficient boiler and double glazing
- Recycling and composting
- Management of trees on the site

3.4. Amenities

The meeting has the amenities required within the ground floor meeting house, including kitchen and WCs.

3.5. Access

The meeting house has level access to all the main ground floor spaces and a fully accessible WC. A hearing loop has been installed. There is on-site parking and regular bus services.

3.6 Community Use

The building is let for community uses for around ten hours per week. There is a lettings policy which excludes the use of alcohol or tobacco on the site and allows free use by Quaker groups.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

The premises include a flat above the meeting room so there is a presence on site. The area is not one characterised by high crime and anti-social behaviour. There have however been attempts to break into the building which were reported to the police.

3.8. Plans for change

There are no immediate 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 only: The building appears to suit and meet the needs of the meeting, however there is ample scope for interior alteration if required.

ii) For wider community use, additional to local meeting use: The area available for use is not large, and use by small groups could be extended if there is demand.

iii) As a consequence of being laid down as a meeting house and passing into secular use: The former school building used by the meeting was remodelled in the late twentieth century and there is no heritage constraint on the internal space being adapted for housing by the adjoining housing association, or another user, if the meeting is laid down. It would be regrettable if any further alterations were undertaken to the main frontage as this still preserves much of the character of the original building.

Part 5: Category: 3