

Friends Meeting House, Mosedale

Mosedale, Mungrisdale, Penrith, CA11 0XQ

National Grid Reference: NY 35692 32236



Statement of Significance

The rural meeting house at Mosedale has high heritage significance as one of the earliest meeting houses in Cumbria, built in 1702, and an association with the Founder of the Religious Society of Friends, George Fox. The vernacular building contains original furnishings and there is an adjacent detached burial ground.

Evidential value

The building and site have medium evidential values primarily associated with the potential to yield information about the building's construction and past Quaker activity.

Historical value

The 1702 meeting house is one of the earliest meeting houses in Cumbria and is associated with early Quakerism and George Fox, the founder of the Religious Society of Friends. The interior retains a number of original features, including the gallery and some seating which express Quaker worship. The meeting house has a high historical value.

Aesthetic value

The meeting house is a good example of Cumberland vernacular architecture, built of local materials and similar in character to adjoining stable and surrounding farm buildings. The buildings are informally grouped at the foot of Carrock Fell (Fig.1), a dramatic setting. The 1970s extension is sympathetic to the vernacular tradition and simple form of the meeting house. Overall, the meeting house and the setting have high aesthetic value.

Communal value

The meeting house and site have high communal value as a building and burial ground (detached) developed for the Quakers. The building provides a community resource as a café which is now a familiar landmark in the area appreciated by local people and visitors. There is also symbolic value with rubbings of lintels from former Quaker houses and a plaque with initials of those individuals who helped restore the building in the 1970s.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Cumberland*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0031950*
- 1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Lake District National Park Authority*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *Historic England*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Mungrisdale*
- 1.7 Listed status: *II*
- 1.8 NHLE: *1137704*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *No*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *Seventeenth century, adapted 1702*
- 1.13 Architect (s): *Not known*

1.14 Date of visit: *5th May 2015*

1.15 Name of report author: *Emma Neil*

1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *June Hall*

1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *stables and detached burial ground (NGR: NY 35731 32239)*

1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*

1.19 Information sources:

David M. Butler, *Quaker Meeting Houses of the Lake Counties* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1978), pp. 73.

David M. Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1999), vol. 1, pp.101-103.

Mollie Grubb, *The Quakers of Mosedale* (Mosedale Preparative Meeting, 2002).

June Hall, *Local Meeting Survey*, May 2015

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

2.1. Historical background

In 1653 George Fox visited Mosedale and held a meeting at the home of John Slee in Mungrisdale, which marked the beginning of Quakerism in this mountainous area. Initially, Friends would meet at each other's houses. By the late seventeenth century the number of Quakers in Mosedale was growing and plans were made to acquire a meeting house.

Documentary evidence suggests that an existing property owned by George Pickering was utilised rather than a new meeting house constructed. Minutes of the Cumberland Quarter Sessions indicate that on 15th July 1702 it was ordered that the house of George Pickering in Mosedale be re-ordered for the public worship of the people called Quakers. The re-ordering involved rebuilding the north-west side wall five feet further out under a catslide roof, to widen the interior. In 1739, Hugh Peacock (the son or nephew to George), transferred the building to the people known as the "Quakers".

In 1884, the roof was probably raised, the windows to the south side were enlarged, the gallery was panelled and alterations made to the benches, all completed at a cost of £50.

Between 1865 to 1973 there were a number of cycles of decline in the membership of Quakers in Mosedale. In times of low numbers, the meeting house was used for other uses including a reading room for men working at the Carrock mine, as a chapel by the Methodists and a chapel of ease by the Church of England.

The meeting house was nearly sold in the 1960s, however, two Friends proposed a dual-purpose use for the meeting house. This resulted in the building being restored and partly adapted as a coffee house for visitors to the area. In 1969, water and electricity and toilet facilities were installed, a small kitchen/serving area created in the meeting room, and land was purchased for a car park.



Figure 1: South-east elevation of the meeting house before extension, 1976 (Mosedale Archive).

In 1977 an extension to the south-west elevation of the meeting house was constructed by volunteer builders to provide accommodation for a caretaker (later used to provide kitchen facilities).

In 1987, the meeting house was re-roofed and one of two rooflights was moved from the south-east pitch to the north-west. At the same time, time render was removed from the south-east wall and the stonework repointed.

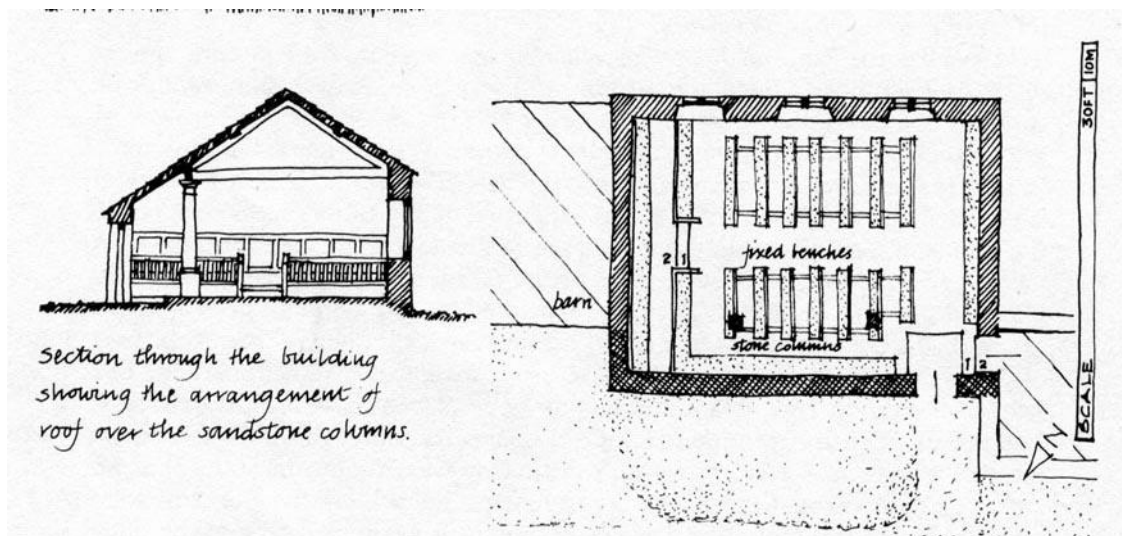


Figure 2: meeting house as reconstructed by David Butler (*Quaker Meeting Houses of the Lake Counties*, 1978), pp. 73 (north is to the bottom left: not to scale)

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The building dates from the seventeenth century, adapted and extended for Quaker use in 1702. It is built in mixed limestone and slate rubble, with sandstone dressings and a Cumbrian green slate roof. The meeting house and stable range are a linear group aligned north-east to south-west, with a south-west addition creating an L-plan. The meeting house divides into a single storey three-bay meeting room, with a single storey eighteenth century extension to the right of the entrance and a single-bay 1970s extension to the south-east.

The front elevation to the north-west faces the road; the entrance is to the right with a planked door and a stone lintel inscribed 1702, but no windows. The catslide roof has a single rooflight to the front. To the right the gable end of the eighteenth century addition projects forwards, and to the left the stable range has double planked timber doors and a single small square timber window. The south-east rear elevation has three 2-light stone mullioned windows (Fig.1), and the twentieth century extension has a matching window. The gable end of the twentieth century extension has a planked doorway, with window in stone surrounds to the left and above. To the left of the extension is the rear of the eighteenth century extension which has a 2-light window. To the north-east is the gable end of the stables.

The interior of the meeting room is rectangular in plan, and entered from the south-west end. The floor is stone flagged and the south-west wall is of exposed stone, other walls are plastered. The 3-bay roof has two tie-beam roof trusses the north-west ends supported on two sandstone Doric columns; the outrigger beyond is an extension of 1702 (Fig.2). The room is lit by two rooflights and 3 windows to the east which still retain the original chains for the shutters (which now no longer exist), and handmade paraffin lamps. The elders' stand to the north-east has pine fielded panelling behind the fitted bench, and a balustrade of splat balusters with central steps and handrails. On the wall above are several rubbings of door lintels from former Quaker houses in the area (Fig.3). Fixed benches include one (Fig.4) with no back rest fixed to the meeting room floor.



Figure 3: Rubbings of lintels from former Quaker houses on the west wall.



Figure 4: Original fixed historic bench (Right).

An internal doorway leads into the eighteenth century extension from the south-west corner; this space is roughly rectangular in plan and now provides for the cloak room and WCs. The small area between this space and the modern extension contains a plaque with the initials of all those who helped with the extension.

2.3. Loose furnishings

The main meeting room contains historic benches that were once fixed to a framework of timbers on the stone floor but are now loose apart from one bench discussed in 2.2. The loose benches are arranged in a square around a central table. The plain benches were altered in 1884 and in 2000 when back rests were added.

2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

Not applicable.

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house is located within the hamlet of Mosedale in the north-east part of the Lake District National Park. Mosedale is set within picturesque unspoilt mountainous surroundings with the steep slopes of Carrock Fell to the west. The hamlet lies in part of the valley of the River Caldew.

The immediate setting of the meeting house is defined by a drystone boundary wall, with an attractive enclosed green space to the east. The grounds are well planted with trees and shrubs which add to the character of the area. To the passer-by it would not be known that the building was a meeting house, due to its simple external character. Adjoining the meeting house is the former stables also built in vernacular style. The key view of the meeting house is from the road. The junction of the road is fronted with two storey domestic buildings, farm buildings and directly west of the meeting house are two vernacular properties.

In 1999, the walls enclosing the detached burial ground (Fig.5) on the other side of the road to the east were renovated with a grant from the Lake District National Park. The drystone

wall between the burial ground and car park was rebuilt. The burial ground is now regularly maintained. (NGR: NY 35731 32239).



Figure 5: Detached burial ground

2.6. Listed status

The Friends meeting house and adjoining stables are appropriately listed as grade II.

The list entry would benefit from being updated to include a description of the interior of the meeting house, and its fittings.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

It is not known whether there is an earlier building on this site. The Lake District Historic Environment Record was consulted and no records have been identified for the site. However, the meeting house building appears to have been enclosed by a boundary wall from the late seventeenth / early eighteenth century and the site and building are considered to have some archaeological potential.

Part 3: Current use and management

See completed volunteer survey

3.1. Condition

- i) Meeting House: Good. A quinquennial survey has been undertaken and the Friends have completed or are or working towards the agreed recommendations.
- ii) Attached burial ground (if any): Not applicable.

3.2. Maintenance

The meeting house has a five year maintenance and repair plan in accordance with the quinquennial survey. Additionally, the Friends regularly monitor the meeting house and have the necessary funds to undertake repairs when needed.

3.3. Sustainability

Although the meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit, steps have been taken to improve sustainability.

- Climate change and energy efficiency: roof has been insulated.
- Wildlife, ecology and conservation: the grounds are planted with trees and shrubs which provide wildlife habitats.

3.4. Amenities

The meeting house has all the amenities it needs. These include a kitchen area, WCs and a meeting room.

3.5. Access

Access to the meeting house for the less able or for wheelchair users is slightly restricted by small steps into the meeting room, to the WCs and kitchen area. The nosings on the steps throughout the meeting house are in a contrasting colour (white) to assist the partially-sighted.

A limited bus service is available in Mosedale, with services provided weekdays and at weekends (including on a Sunday). The meeting house has its own car park located to the east at the cross roads. Car parking is free for Quakers and a small donation is asked from others, in particular walkers who use the facility.

3.6 Community Use

The meeting house is used by community groups throughout the year. The Northern Fells Group have used the meeting house for over ten years as a café and for arts and crafts and bric-a-brac sales for twenty hours a week during July and September each year. A singing group and the Cumbria Vernacular Buildings Group use the meeting house intermittently throughout the year. There is no formal lettings policy, however all lettings are decided and agreed by the Friends.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

The area has low crime levels and there has been no heritage crime at the site.

3.8. Plans for change

The Friends have aspirations to improve the WC facilities in the future.

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. This is a small meeting house and the scope for change is limited. The adjacent stables are currently used for storage and could be sympathetically altered if needed.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use. The meeting house is already used for wider community use between July and September and has the facilities to support this.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House. The meeting house has been laid down previously. The area is a popular location for walkers and visitors. The meeting house is already used as a café and tourist shop which could be continued. The adjacent stable has the potential to be converted into a holiday home / flat, subject to planning permission.

Part 5: Category: 2

Part 6: List descriptions (s)

Name: FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE AND ADJOINING STABLES

List entry Number: 1137704

FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE AND ADJOINING STABLES

CountyDistrict District Type Parish

Cumbria Eden District Authority Mungrisdale

National Park: LAKE DISTRICT

Grade: II

Date first listed: 11-Jan-1985

NY 33 SE MUNGRISDALE Mosedale

3/24 Friends' Meeting House and adjoining stables

G.V. II

Friends' Meeting House/tearoom, with adjoining stables. On C17 site, rebuilding dated over entrance 1702 with C19 inscription FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE; 1970's extension. Partly rendered mixed limestone and slate rubble, stables with flush sandstone quoins. Graduated greenslate roofs. Single-storey 3-bay meeting house with C20 single-bay extension under common roof; C18 right-angled extension to right and lower stable to left, making overall L-shape. Facade to road has plank door in chamfered surround. Stable has plank door to right and small opening to left. Rear of meeting house has 2-light stone-mullioned windows, with matching window in C20 extension and similar contemporary window in side wall of the C18 extension. Interior retains much of its original fitting although used as a tearoom. C18 benches, wooden panelling behind railed minister's gallery. Roof trusses supported on 2 sandstone columns. Windows retain chains for pulling up internal shutters from the outside. Meetings were discontinued in 1913 and it was used as a Church of England chapel from 1936-1970. See David Butler, Quaker Meeting Houses of the Lake Counties, 1978 pp73-76, plans and drawings.

Listing NGR: NY3569232236