

Friends Meeting House, Muswell Hill

Church Crescent, Muswell Hill, London, N10 3NE

National Grid Reference: TQ 28526 89196



Statement of Significance

As first built in 1926 to the designs of the Quaker architect Fred Rowntree, the meeting house was a simple and pleasing building in a vaguely Arts & Crafts style, but it has been very considerably enlarged in a way which has obscured much of its original character, although the original meeting room survives. The meeting house is of low to medium heritage value.

Evidential value

The meeting house dates from 1925/6 and is of medium evidential value for its mixture of original and later fabric.

Historical value

The building was erected on a new site to serve a new meeting and in itself is of low historical value.

Aesthetic value

Rowntree's original design was simple and not without appeal, but his building has been swamped by later additions which make the whole of low aesthetic value. The meeting room alone is of medium aesthetic value.

Communal value

The building has been in continuous use by Quakers and other local community groups for nearly ninety years and is of high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *North West London*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0002890*
- 1.3 Owner: *Six Weeks Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *London Borough of Haringey*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *London*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Muswell Hill NPA*
- 1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*
- 1.8 NHLE: *N/a*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *Muswell Hill*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *1926; additions 1962, 1985, 1992*
- 1.13 Architect (s): *Fred Rowntree, Hubert Lidbetter (1962), R H Partnership (1985)*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *15 September 2015*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Neil Burton*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Warden*
- 1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *None*
- 1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*
- 1.19 Information sources:

Butler, D.M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol.1, pp.408/9
The Friend, 1926, 676; 1985,1172

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

2.1. Historical background

Muswell Hill Friends first met in 1910 in a room on Fortis Green Road. A new meeting house was built in 1926 to the designs of the Quaker architect Fred Rowntree, on land provided by the Monthly Meeting. A single storey classroom was added in 1962 at the rear of the meeting house to the designs of Hubert Lidbetter, then architect to Six Weeks Meeting. A more substantial addition was made in 1985 with a two storey extension across the original main front. The rear classroom was replaced with a two storey structure in the 1990s.

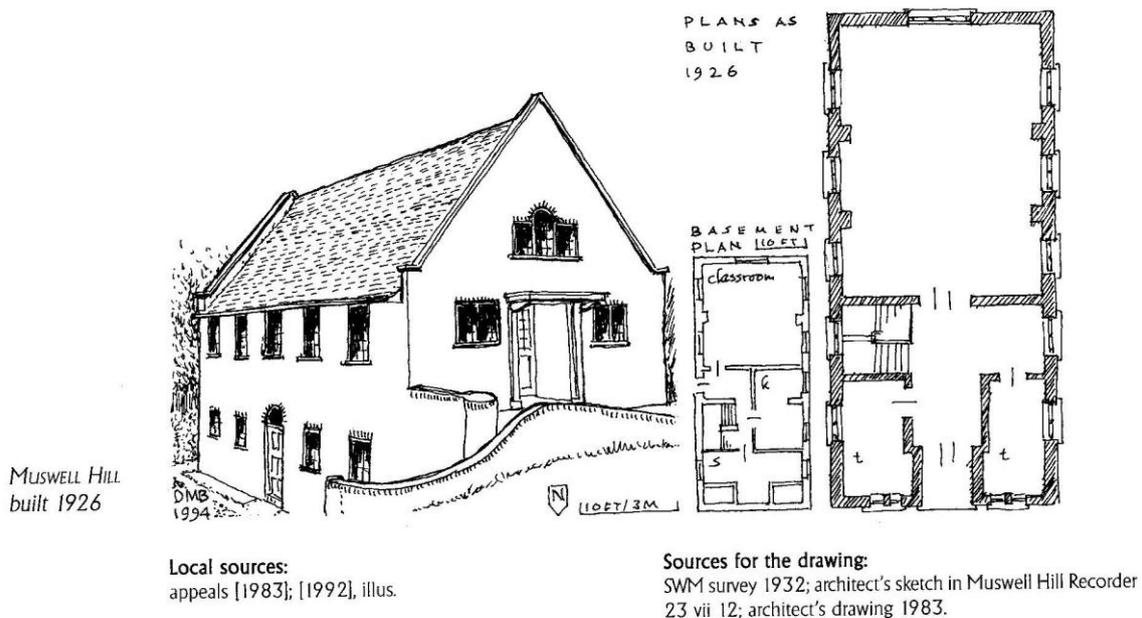


Fig.1 The plan of the building, with a perspective sketch, *Butler*, vol.1 p.409.

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

As first built, the meeting house comprised a single range of building five bays long, with walls of red and blue brick laid in stretcher bond and a pitched roof covered in tiles. The entrance was in the gable-end facing the street and the slope of the land meant that a basement storey could be formed beneath the meeting room. The original front elevation was lost in 1985 when a new two-storey block containing residential accommodation was added, with a pitched roof at right angles to the main range. The present north-facing entrance front, with its canopied central doorway, flanking casement windows and a four-light casement window and fanlight over, is a 1980s paraphrase of the original. Another two storey addition was made across the rear (south) end of the meeting house in the 1990s, continuing the original main roofline. Now only the side walls of the original 1920s building are still visible, with a row of simple two-light timber casement windows on two floors. Inside the building, the only surviving part of the original interior is the main meeting room, which has a vertical boarded dado and massive timber roof-trusses with Queen posts and curved braces. The roof is ceiled above the collars.

2.3 Loose furnishings

There are no loose furnishings of heritage interest.

2.4. Attached burial ground (if any)

None

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house stands in a residential street lined with substantial late nineteenth-century houses on the south western slope of Muswell Hill.

2.6. Listed status

The building is not a candidate for listing.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

The building was erected on a greenfield site with low archaeological potential.

Part 3: Current use and management

Volunteer survey not received

3.1. Condition

- i) Meeting House: Good
- ii) Attached burial ground (if any): Not applicable

3.2. Maintenance

No information received

3.3. Sustainability

No information received

3.4. Amenities

No information received

3.5. Access

No information received

3.6 Community Use

No information received

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

No information received

3.8. Plans for change

No information received

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 house appears to have all the facilities it currently needs but there is scope for further change, if required.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: the meeting house is already well-used by community groups. There is scope for further change, if required.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House: if laid down, the building could readily serve a wholly secular use.

Part 5: Category: 3