

## ***Friends Meeting House, New Barnet***

*55 Leicester Road, New Barnet, Barnet, London, EN5 5EL*

*National Grid Reference: TQ 26068 96143*



### ***Statement of Significance***

***A meeting house of the late 1930s built on a new site in a very simplified version of Arts & Crafts vernacular. The building is of medium heritage significance.***

#### ***Evidential value***

***The meeting house was built in the late 1930s on a greenfield site and has been little altered. It is of low evidential value***

#### ***Historical value***

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

#### ***Aesthetic value***

***Brown's design is simple but not without appeal and is of medium aesthetic value.***

#### ***Communal value***

***The building is very well used by Quakers and local community groups and has high communal value.***

## **Part 1: Core data**

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *North London*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0001260*
- 1.3 Owner: *Six Weeks Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *London Borough of Barnet*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *London*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *High Barnet NPA*
- 1.7 Listed status: *Not listed*
- 1.8 NHLE: *Not applicable*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *No*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *1939*
- 1.13 Architect (s): *L.L. Brown ARIBA*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *18 September 2015*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Neil Burton*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Jane Elms*
- 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, p.263  
*The Architect & Building News*, 18 August 1939, p.185  
*The Friend* 1938, p.535; 1939, p.286  
Local Meeting survey by Jane Elms, September 2015  
Local Meeting archive

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

### 2.1. Historical background

The site for the meeting house was purchased in 1938 and the building was opened in 1939. There have been minor alterations and improvements to the interior but in many respects the meeting house is much as first built.

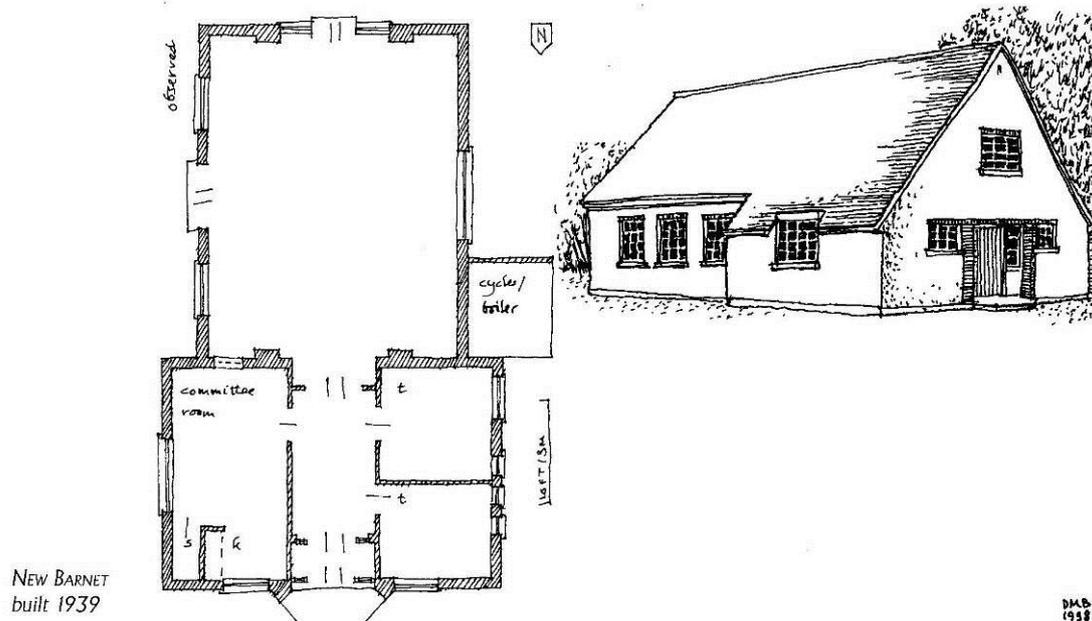


Fig.1 A perspective view and ground plan from *Butler*, vol.1 p.263

### 2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The meeting house is in a simple vernacular style, and is planned with a rectangular meeting room at the rear behind a wider front section containing smaller rooms and services. The whole building was originally single-storeyed but stairs now give access to an upper space in the front section. The external walls are of yellow stock brick laid in stretcher bond with a broad overall pitched roof covered in tiles. The windows were originally of the metal Crittal type, but have been replaced with uPVC windows of similar form and glazing pattern to the originals.

The main front to the street has a wide gable brought down to low eaves, with a central entrance between canted brick piers carrying a flat projecting canopy. On either side are small horizontal windows. The whole entrance has a slightly Arts & Crafts character. The side walls of the front section have the small windows appropriate to service rooms; the meeting room at the rear has larger rectangular windows, with a French window on the east side. The rear (south) elevation has another French window, this time with side lights with a vertical light over. The meeting room with its wood-block floor has been little altered, although the tall ceiling has been lined with acoustic tiling over the original plaster.

### 2.3 Loose furnishings

There are no loose furnishings of heritage significance

### 2.4. Attached burial ground

Not applicable

## 2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house stands in a residential street lined with a mixture of detached and semi-detached inter-war houses and some more modern blocks of similar scale.

## 2.6. Listed status

The building is not listed or locally listed, nor in a conservation area. It is not a candidate for the statutory list but might be considered appropriate for the local list. Despite the replacement of all the original windows, the building is a pleasant 1930s design.

## 2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

The site has low archaeological potential.

## **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 was made in 2015 by a suitably qualified person. Some damp penetration was identified, which is to be remedied in October 2015. The meeting has enough money to cover the costs of maintenance and repair, though major works are the responsibility of Six Weeks Meeting. The meeting does not have a separate 5-year maintenance and repair plan.

### 3.3. Sustainability

The meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit but has implemented measures to reduce its environmental impact. These include

- 15 solar panels were installed in 2012
- The loft additional insulation has been improved
- Windows have been double glazed and lined curtains hung.
- Automatic taps and urinal limit water use

The building does have an Energy Performance Certificate: the EPC rating is 73.

### 3.4. Amenities

The meeting has all the amenities it needs in the meeting house, with adequate toilets, kitchen and meeting space. There is a no resident warden or caretaker.

There is good public transport by rail and bus every day of the week within a reasonable distance (bus 1/4 mile, overground train 1/4 mile, underground 1 mile). There are 4 car spaces but no secure storage for bicycles.

### 3.5. Access

The meeting house is accessible to people with disabilities. There is level access into and inside the building and an accessible WC. A hearing loop was installed in 2013. There are facilities for partially-sighted people. There has not been a Disability Access Audit.

### 3.6 Community Use

Friends use the building for about 3 hours per week. The building is theoretically available for community lettings for a maximum number of 140 hours per week (two rooms) and is used for approximately 118 hours per week. The meeting has a lettings policy. Quaker groups are allowed to use the meeting house for free. Users value the good location, comfort and competitive rates.

### 3.7. Vulnerability to crime

There are no signs of general crime at the meeting house but there has been some heritage crime; lead was stolen from the roof in 2012. The locality is generally well cared-for, has low crime levels, low deprivation and high community confidence. Friends have developed a liaison with the Local Neighbourhood Policing Team.

### 3.8. Plans for change

There are currently no 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 used only by the local Meeting:* the meeting house appears to be perfectly adequate in its present form. There has already been some internal alteration and there is probably scope for further minor changes without unduly altered the character of the building.

*ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use:* the building is already heavily used by the wider community. Change would almost certainly mean enlargement, which would detract from the original simple design.

*iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House:* if the meeting was laid down, the building could probably find a suitable alternative use.

## **Part 5: Category: 3**