

Friends Meeting House, Norton

50 The Green, Norton, Stockton-on-Tees, TS20 1DY

National Grid Reference: NZ 44614 22188



Statement of Significance

The meeting house was originally opened in the 1670s but has been very considerably enlarged and altered; the listed building is now partly modern in character. The burial ground also dates from the late seventeenth century. Together the meeting house and burial ground are of medium heritage significance.

Evidential value

The building contains a limited amount of early fabric and is of medium evidential value. The site has high archaeological potential, with the burial ground and known medieval archaeology.

Historical value

There has been a meeting house on this site since the 1670s, though not in continuous use. The burial ground has also been in use since the late seventeenth century. Together they are of high historical value.

Aesthetic value

The main front of the building is covered in twentieth century roughcast and the rear is largely obscured by a modern addition. The interior is relatively bare. The building as a whole is of medium aesthetic value.

Communal value

The present building house been in use for Quaker worship since 1902 and more recently for other community uses. It is of medium communal value.

Part 1: Core data

1.1 Area Meeting: *Teesdale & Cleveland*

1.2 Property Registration Number: *0032370*

1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*

1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council*

1.5 Historic England locality: *North East*

1.6 Civil parish: *Stockton-on-Tees*

1.7 Listed status: *II*

1.8 NHLE: *1140018*

1.9 Conservation Area: *Norton*

1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*

1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*

1.12 Date(s): *1671; 1821; 1902; 1969; 1985; 2005*

1.13 Architect (s): *Not established; twentieth century additions by Robert H Pearson Assocs.*

1.14 Date of visit: *17 May 2016*

1.15 Name of report author: *Neil Burton*

1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Andrew Mills*

1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *None*

1.18 Attached burial ground: *Yes*

1.19 Information sources:

Butler, D.M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol.1 pp.162-3

Stell Christopher, *Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting houses in the North of England*, *RCHM*, 1994, p.222

Tees Archaeology SMR ref. no. 4989

Local Meeting survey by Andrew Mills, January 2016

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

2.1. Historical background

A meeting house on the present site was opened in 1672. Apparently it was converted from an existing building. The form and extent of this early meeting house are unclear. The meeting closed in the mid-eighteenth century but revived in 1798 and at some time before 1821 the meeting house building was extended to the north and given an internal partition. The meeting was again discontinued between 1836 and 1895 and the building served for a while during this period as a Methodist chapel. In 1902 the building was extensively restored. The roughcast finish and some or all of the windows on the west wall facing Norton Green probably date from this time. Some internal spaces were renovated in 1969, when the present stand was apparently installed or renewed. In 1984 a modern flat-roofed extension was added at the rear of the building containing toilets and kitchen. The extension was enlarged in 2005.

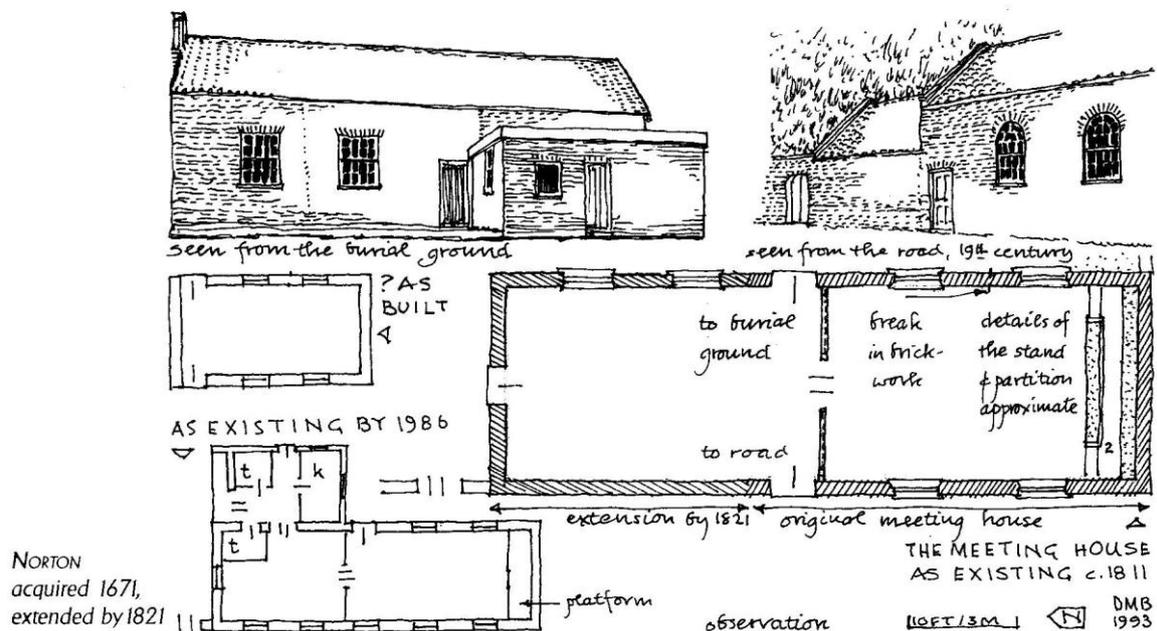


Fig.1 Perspective views and development plans of the meeting house, *Butler 1999 vol.1 p.163*.
The rear addition has been further enlarged since the plan was made.

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The Norton meeting house is rectangular on plan, with modern lean-to additions along most of the rear (east) wall. The long west side towards Norton Green is faced with painted roughcast, (presumably to conceal the joints between different phases of building). The small visible section of the rear wall of the meeting house is of red brick laid in garden wall bond. The rear additions are of red brick in stretcher bond. Both the main pitched roof and the rear lean-to roof are covered in new red pantiles. The west side has five round-headed window openings with modern small-paned glazing. The remaining exposed section of the old east side wall has a single rectangular opening with similar glazing. The internal spaces are largely modern in character, but the meeting room at the south end of the main building has a vertical boarded dado which is ramped at the east end where there is a low platform and a panelled timber front with dwarf balustrade forming a stand. Stell dates the stand to the early nineteenth century but apparently both dado and stand were installed or entirely renewed in the 1960s (ex. inf. Andrew Mills, who also thinks that the roof construction is not historic, and probably dates from 1902).

2.3. Loose furnishings

There are several heavy unpainted pine benches in the meeting room, probably of nineteenth century date. They may come from the Stockton meeting house (Stockton meeting was amalgamated with Norton in 1975).

2.4. Attached burial ground

Behind the meeting house to the west is a large rectangular burial ground enclosed by brick walls on three sides. The ground is laid to grass with a very large sycamore tree in one corner. The surviving stone burial markers have been ranged along the walls.

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house stands on the east side of Norton Green, a large open space in the centre of this attractive historic village, now a popular suburb of Stockton on Tees.

2.6. Listed status

The List description states the building is listed for historical interest. This is probably appropriate since there is little evident historic fabric.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

The Historic Environment Record records an excavation in 2004 which revealed some mediaeval pottery and a cobbled yard surface behind the meeting house. The site is on the edge of Norton Green and is of high archaeological potential.

Part 3: Current use and management

See completed volunteer survey

3.1. Condition

- i) Meeting House: Good.
- ii) Attached burial ground: Generally satisfactory but with one significant localised problem. The ownership of one side wall of the burial ground is disputed and the wall is in need of repair.

3.2. Maintenance

A Quinquennial Inspection has been carried out (date and author not supplied). All identified minor works have been carried out but there is a continuing damp problem on the west front which may be connected to the covering over of ventilation outlets - recently rectified. The Local Meeting has enough money to cover internal works and there is a 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:

- A new combi boiler with timer and three thermostatically-controlled zones.
- Low energy lighting.
- Recycling as much as possible

- Encourage members to share cars or cycle

The meeting house does not have an EPC; the meeting has been advised that it is not appropriate for listed buildings (which is not correct).

3.4. Amenities

The meeting has all the amenities it needs in the meeting house - including two meeting rooms, a well-equipped kitchen and toilets. There is no resident warden. Public transport is poor, with one bus from central Stockton. There is usually adequate street parking but there is no secure parking for bicycles.

3.5. Access

There is level access to the meeting house and throughout the building. There is an accessible WC and two individual hearing loops. There are some facilities for partially-sighted people but these could be improved upon. A Disability Access Audit has not been carried out.

3.6 Community Use

Friends use the building for 2 hours per week. The meeting spaces in the building are available for community lettings for a possible 108 hours per week and are used for approximately 12 hours per week. The meeting has a lettings policy, but this is currently under review. Users value the calm atmosphere, accessibility and price.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

There has been no sign of general crime but there has been some heritage crime at the site. An attempt was made to steal lead from the roof some years ago. Less valuable materials have now been substituted. The area is generally well cared-for, has low crime levels, low deprivation and high community confidence. There is no liaison with the local neighbourhood policing team and it is not considered necessary.

3.8. Plans for change

No changes are planned at the meeting house.

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: there may be some scope for minor change to the building, subject to listed building constraints.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: as above, there may be scope for minor alterations, subject to listed building constraints.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House: the building occupies an attractive site facing Norton Green and would probably find another use if the meeting were laid down.

Part 5: Category: 2

Part 6: List description

Name: **FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE**

List entry Number: 1140018

Location

FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, 50, THE GREEN

District: Stockton-on-Tees

District Type: Unitary Authority

Grade: II

Date first listed: 19-Jan-1951

List entry Description

NZ 4422 SE NORTON THE GREEN (East side) HIGH ROW 21/195 No 50

19.1.51 (Friends' Meeting House) II

1671 Became a Methodist Chapel 1825, restored as Meeting House in 1902. No visible traces of C17 work. Roughcast, pantiled deep eaves. One storey 5 bays, round arched windows. Roughcast gate piers on North side have half- pyramidal caps with arcaded moulding below. Included for historical interest.

Listing NGR: NZ4461422188