

Friends Mission Hall, Pakefield

St George's Road, Pakefield, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 0JP

National Grid Reference: TM 53900 90822



Statement of Significance

The building has high heritage significance as a rare example of a Quaker mission hall, purpose-built in the late nineteenth century and still in use for its original purpose.

Evidential value

As a single phase building, the building has little potential to yield evidence of past human activity and it is unlikely there is below-ground archaeology. It is of low evidential value.

Historical value

As a rare survival illustrating a distinctive phase of Quaker activity, the mission building is of high historical value.

Aesthetic value

Apart from some modest structural ornament on the front, the building is an economical and functional design with medium aesthetic value.

Communal value

In its heyday, during the first half of the twentieth century, the mission was a very active and important party of this maritime community and a pioneer of

adult education. The level of activity is now much less but the mission hall is still of high communal value.

Part 1: Core data

1.1 Area Meeting: *Norfolk and Waveney*

1.2 Property Registration Number: *2018668*

1.3 Owner: *Friends Trusts Ltd*

1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Waveney District Council*

1.5 Historic England locality: *East of England*

1.6 Civil parish: *Lowestoft NPA*

1.7 Listed status: *Not listed, not locally 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): *1897*

1.13 Architect(s): *Not known*

1.14 Date of visit: *25 June 2014*

1.15 Name of report author: *Neil Burton*

1.16 Name of contact made on site: *Alan Boyce*

1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *Pakefield Meeting House is a short distance away (see separate report)*

1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*

1.19 Information sources:

Butler, D.M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 1999, vol. 2, p. 577

Transcript of a talk on the mission given by Jim Colby at the Norwich & Lynn Monthly Meeting at Beccles on 10 March 1979 (supplied by Alan Boyce)

Local Meeting survey by Lucy Parker, 2014 and 2015

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

2.1 Historical background

Pakefield Mission Hall is a rare survivor of an evangelising movement in the Society of Friends which flourished in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The hall was erected in 1897 to accommodate a more active pattern of worship than usual in a conventional Quaker meeting, with hymns and preaching. It was also built to provide a location for an adult school to tackle widespread illiteracy in the local community and a Sunday School for young people. The adult school closed during Second World War but the mission continued to thrive. Land adjoining the mission hall was purchased in 1958 for use as a car park. Improvements were made to the amenities of the building in the 1960s and the interior was re-furnished in the 1970s.

2.2 The building and its principal fittings and furnishings

The mission hall is rectangular on plan with a rear extension. The walls are of red brick laid in Flemish bond with some white brick corner piers, roof-copings, window-heads and banding ornamenting the main west front facing the street. The pitched roof is covered with Welsh slate. The main front faces east with a central projecting brick porch, flanked by two segment headed windows on each side above stone plaques commemorating the foundation. Above the porch is a single segment-headed window rising into the gable between three more stone plaques with the words FRIENDS, MISSION, HALL. The north side elevation is blind, but has large skylights in the roof. The south side elevation has four large rectangular openings with flat brick arches and timber window frames. On the rear elevation is a lean-to addition linked to a modest outbuilding.

The interior has a timber floor, and plain plastered walls with a high vertical-boarded timber dado. The ceiling rises into the roof to collar level and the main rafters are exposed. There are large skylights in the north roof-slope. At one end of the hall is a raised dais enclosed by a timber rail with turned balusters. There are no other fittings.

2.3 Loose furnishings

None of note

2.4 Attached burial ground

N/a

2.5 The meeting house in its wider setting

The mission hall stands in a quiet back street lined with modest two-storey late nineteenth and early twentieth century terraced brick houses. The small front forecourt is enclosed with a brick wall, with a lawn to the south side where there is space to park cars.

2.6 Listed status

The building is not a candidate for the statutory list but may be eligible for a local list, for its historical value.

2.7 Archaeological potential of the site

There were no earlier structures on the site and it seems unlikely that the site has any archaeological potential.

Part 3: Current use and management

3.1 Condition

- i) Meeting house: Good.
- ii) Attached burial ground (if any): None

3.2 Maintenance

There has been a recent Quinquennial Inspection. The meeting does not have enough money to maintain and repair the building, nor does it have a five-year maintenance and repair plan.

3.3 Sustainability

The meeting does not use the Sustainability Toolkit. There is no Energy Performance Certificate for the mission hall but the meeting might consider obtaining one.

3.4 Amenities and

The mission has all the necessary facilities in the building. There is no resident warden. There is off-street parking for cars and ample space for bicycles.

3.5 Access

It is reasonably accessible to people with mobility disabilities, but there is no hearing loop and no facilities for the partially-sighted. There has been no Disability Access Audit.

3.6 Community use

Friends use the meeting house for 2 hours per week. The building is theoretically available for community lettings for a maximum number of 30 hours per week. It is used for an average of 12 hours per week. Users value the building for its warmth, cleanliness, good location, quiet and good price.

3.7 Vulnerability to crime

There has been no reported heritage crime. There is no established liaison with the Local Neighbourhood Policing Team but the meeting might consider making contact.

3.8 Plans for change

There are currently (2015) no plans for the building.

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 interior is a simple open space with a small dais at one end but no other fixtures. It could adapt easily to a different form of worship, if required.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: extended use could be easily accommodated.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting: the building could serve a range of secular uses, in the event of closure.

Part 5: Category: 3