

Friends Meeting House, Preston

189 St George's Road, Preston, PR1 6NQ

National Grid Reference: SD 54314 30558



Statement of Significance

The meeting house is of low-key design typical of the inter-war period. It has an attractive appearance with a spacious interior and good amenities.

Evidential value

The meeting house is of one principal phase and constructed of materials and in a style typical of the day. It is of low evidential significance

Historical value

The building is typical of inter-war architecture style adopting a traditional approach with somewhat Arts and Crafts touches. The building illustrates the resources of Friends in Preston at the time, and pressures which encouraged moving from the town centre to the suburbs. The building is of low historic significance.

Aesthetic value

The building is fairly attractive, with a few Arts and Crafts touches, combined with a broadly Tudor or Elizabethan style. It has low-medium aesthetic significance.

Communal value

The meeting house has a distinctive style within the street scene, while matching local housing in terms of building materials and scale. There are community allotment plots and the hall is well used by local groups. The meeting house has medium communal value.

Part 1: Core data

1.1 Area Meeting: *Lancashire Central & North*

1.2 Property Registration Number: *0007070*

1.3 Owner: *Area Meeting*

1.4 Local Planning Authority: *Preston City Council*

- 1.5 Civil parish: *Preston*
- 1.6 Historic England locality: *North West*
- 1.7 Listed status: N/A
- 1.8 NHLE: N/A
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *Moor Park*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *1925*
- 1.13 Architect (s): *Silk Wilson & Sons*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *26 June 2015*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Clare Hartwell*
- 1.16 Name of contact made on site: *Peter Bullman*
- 1.17 Associated buildings and sites: *none*
- 1.18 Attached burial ground: *No*
- 1.19 Information Sources:

Baines, E., *History, Directory and Gazetteer of the County Palatine of Lancaster*, Vol 3 (1825), map of Preston.

Butler, D. M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1999), vol. 1, pp. 329–332

Lancashire Record Office: Register CBP/84/9; Plans ref. 16041 18/5/1925; Plans ref. 16081 20/7/1925

<http://www.lancsquakers.org.uk/preston.php>

Peter Bullman, *Local Meeting Survey*, March 2015

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

2.1. Historical background

Quakers have a long history in Preston; James Jameson registered his dwelling in Preston as a meeting house in 1689. A building near Spring Gardens in Preston was acquired in 1730 for use as a meeting house. Towards the end of the eighteenth century new premises were sought once more, and a field on the north-west side of Preston off Friargate was bought for the purpose in 1779. A meeting house was erected there and opened in 1782. This building is shown on a map surveyed in 1824 (fig.1). It was rebuilt on the same site in 1847 and a separate school building was later added.

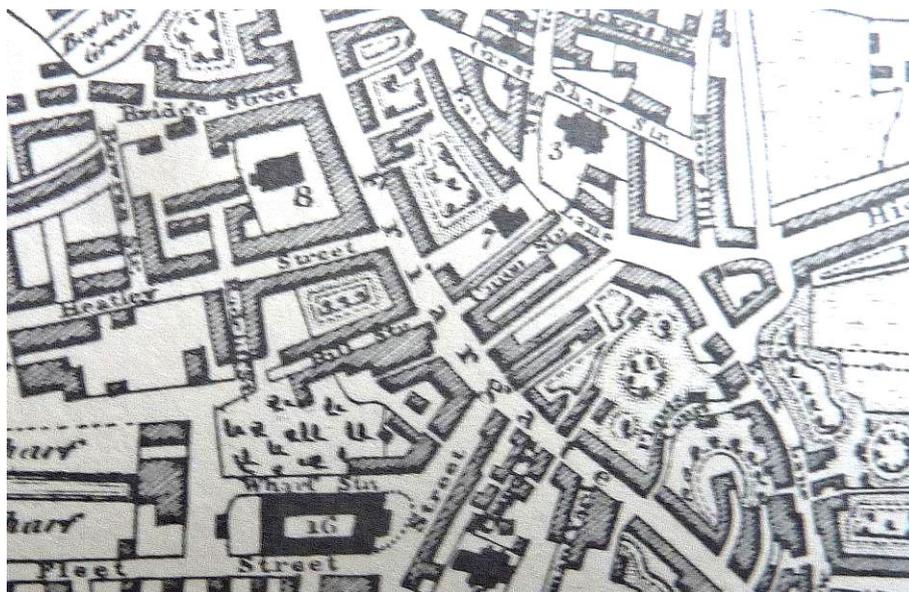


Figure 1. Detail of a map of Preston surveyed by R. Thornton in 1824 (Baines). The 18th century meeting house is shown near the centre and numbered 7.

In 1925 the site was sold and a new meeting house built on the present site, to the north-east of the town centre. The building was altered during the 1980s when new WCs were built, replacing ones in the cellar. In 1994 interior alterations included removal of the raised elders' stand in the meeting room and replacement of panelling. The kitchen was refurbished in 2005.

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

The meeting house is dated 1925, and was built to the designs of Silk Wilson & Sons of Manchester on an island site. It is of hard red brick laid in stretcher bond with stone dressings and a tiled roof. The latter is fitted with solar panels of twenty-first century date. Rear elevations are built of stock brick. The plan takes the form of a large open hall divided from service and office areas by a corridor. The front elevation has a gabled porch offset to one side with a central flat-headed entrance and two small flanking windows. The hall on the east side is lit by closely spaced mullioned-and-transomed windows. The main entrance is up stone steps and leads into a corridor with offices, WCs, kitchen etc., on the left (west) side and a large open hall on the right. This room has an exposed arch-braced timber roof with pendants, matchboard panelling to dado height, built-in cupboards and a wood block floor.

2.3 Loose furnishings

Most loose furnishings are modern. There are a few wooden benches with shaped bench ends. These have been stripped and varnished and could be original to the building.

2.4. Attached burial ground. N/A.

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house stands in its own grounds, which have been maintained as gardens with communal allotments. The building is within an urban residential area on the north-east side of Preston close to Moor Park and Preston North End football ground. The local street pattern is laid out on a grid, and St George's Road is a busy thoroughfare.

2.6. Listed status

The building is not listed and not considered to be a candidate for listing. It could be eligible for a local list.

2.7. Archaeological potential

There is no Historic Environment Record entry for the site, which as a green field site is likely to have low archaeological potential.

Part 3: Current use and management

See completed volunteer survey

3.1. Condition

- i) Meeting House: Good
- ii) Attached burial ground. N/A.

3.2. Maintenance

A QI was undertaken in November 2010 and recommended various works including roof repairs, lowering of the exterior ground level, pointing and general works of maintenance. Most of these have been undertaken, except treatment of slippery paths and front door repairs. Problems of condensation have not been fully resolved. The garden is in fair condition and partly maintained by local people as allotments.

3.3. Sustainability

The meeting uses the Sustainability Toolkit and has an energy performance certificate. The following measures have been implemented:

- Climate change & energy efficiency: Solar panels installed on roof. Improved control of heating by installing a 2-zone system
- Wildlife, ecology and nature conservation: The garden has been made into four mini-allotments for use by local residents.

3.4. Amenities

The meeting has the amenities it needs, including a small kitchen and two WCs.

3.5. Access

There is a ramp to the main entrance, level access throughout and a disabled toilet. A hearing loop is available. There is no dedicated car parking, but there are regular bus services and free parking seven days a week.

3.6 Community Use

The meeting house is used by other groups for about 20 to 25 hours per week. There is a broad lettings policy in which groups wishing to use the building are asked to observe the following maxim: 'Quakers believe in peace, love to all, and tolerance. Please do not use our Meeting House for any purpose that contradicts these beliefs'.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

Problems are not considered to be great, however there have been attempts to steal lead from the roof. Windows have been smashed in the past, and these are now protected by mesh grilles. There is a continuing problem of anti-social behaviour in the form of littering and fly-tipping on the gardens.

3.8. Plans for change

There are plans to give the front of the building a facelift to improve the appearance and make it more visible. Changes are likely to be cosmetic in character.

Part 4: Impact of Change

4.1. To what extent is the building amenable or vulnerable to change?

i) As a Meeting House only: the upgrading of the toilets, refurbishment of the kitchen and alterations to the hall seem to answer the needs of the meeting at present, however there is scope for further change if required.

ii) For wider community use, additional to local Meeting use: the place is fairly well used and changes could be made to facilitate wider use if required.

iii) As a consequence of being laid down as a Meeting House and passing into secular use: there would be no heritage constraints to converting the building for alternative use.

Part 5: Category: 4