

Friends Meeting House, Richmond upon Thames

1 Retreat Road, Richmond, London, TW9 1NN

National Grid Reference: TQ 17601 74791



Statement of Significance

A fine mid-nineteenth-century stuccoed semi-detached house in the Riverside Conservation Area, acquired by Friends in the 1970s, which is of medium heritage significance overall.

Evidential value

The building was built as a house and has been in use as a meeting house only since 1971. As such, its evidential value is low.

Historical value

The building is of high historical value as a mid-nineteenth-century house in a historic location within the Richmond Riverside Conservation Area, close to the sites of Richmond Palace and a medieval friary. As a meeting house however, its historical value is low.

Aesthetic value

As a fine mid-nineteenth-century stuccoed house which makes a positive contribution to the conservation area, the aesthetic value of the building is high.

Communal value

Wider use of the building is hampered by access issues. While the building makes a positive contribution to the local scene, its use as a meeting house is of low communal value.

Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Area Meeting: *Kingston & Wandsworth*
- 1.2 Property Registration Number: *0032860*
- 1.3 Owner: *Six Weeks Meeting*
- 1.4 Local Planning Authority: *London Borough of Richmond upon Thames*
- 1.5 Historic England locality: *London*
- 1.6 Civil parish: *Richmond upon Thames NPA*
- 1.7 Listed status: *Locally listed*
- 1.8 NHLE: *N/a*
- 1.9 Conservation Area: *Richmond Riverside*
- 1.10 Scheduled Ancient Monument: *No*
- 1.11 Heritage at Risk: *No*
- 1.12 Date(s): *c1850*
- 1.13 Architect(s): *Not established*
- 1.14 Date of visit: *10 November 2015*
- 1.15 Name of report author: *Andrew Derrick*
- 1.16 Name of contact(s) made on site: *Edmund Greene*
- 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. 2, p. 595
Local Meeting Survey, by Peter Maple, 24 June 2015

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

2.1. Historical background

The property is a mid-nineteenth-century stuccoed semi-detached house, acquired by Friends in 1971 for £19,500.

2.2. The building and its principal fittings and fixtures

A large mid-nineteenth-century semi-detached house of Italianate character, of two storeys over a raised basement with stucco detailing and overhanging eaves and central brick stack to the shallow-pitched slate roof. The rear elevation is faced in brick. The large plate glass sash windows have been renewed in uPVC. The front entrance is up a flight of steps, with two interconnected ground floor rooms off the entrance hall serving as the meeting house. The front room retains its original cornice and ceiling rose, while the rear room has lost this

detailing. Windows at both front and back retain their raised timber surrounds and shutters. At the rear, down a short stair, is a kitchen and WCs. The basement and first floor are in use as two separate flats.

2.3 Loose furnishings

There are no loose furnishings calling for special mention.

2.4. Attached burial ground

None.

2.5. The meeting house in its wider setting

The meeting house is in Retreat Lane, a historic location close to Richmond Green and the site of Richmond Palace, within the Richmond Riverside Conservation Area. It forms one half of a semi-detached pair located near a dog-leg in the street. There is a public car park at the rear, and space for parking two cars at the front of the meeting house.

2.6. Listed status

The building is not listed, although it is included in the London Borough of Richmond's local list. As a fine Italianate stucco design of the mid-nineteenth-century it cannot, with its neighbour at no. 2, be ruled out as a possible candidate for listing. A more detailed inspection would be required, as well as further research into the date, builder and architect.

2.7. Archaeological potential of the site

The building is near the site of Richmond Palace and a fifteenth-century friary. The archaeological potential may be high, although the excavation required for the basement at the time of construction would have disturbed archaeological deposits.

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

No information has been provided, but the building appears to be in good condition and well maintained.

3.3. Sustainability

The questionnaire states that a combi gas central heating boiler has been installed. It can also be noted that double glazing has been fitted in the windows.

3.4. Amenities

The Meeting continues that it has the facilities it needs. These consist of two interconnected rooms, a kitchen and WCs.

3.5. Access

The building is not currently easily accessible. The main entrance is up a flight of steps and there are further steps down to the kitchen and WCs from the meeting room. The WCs are not to accessible standard, and work to make them so would only of course be justified if access was generally improved. The questionnaire states that 'we are planning to install access for disabled people and a disabled toilet', but it is not stated how this would be achieved. The matter will require some thought, given the constraints of local listing and the location within a conservation area. An access audit has not been carried out. A hearing loop is installed but no special provision has been made for partially-sighted people.

3.6 Community Use

Friends use the building for two to three hours a week. The meeting room is let for two hours out of a possible thirty per week, but this is soon to be increased to ten. A lettings policy is being developed. Extended use of the building is hampered by the access issues outline above.

3.7. Vulnerability to crime

No instances of crime or antisocial behaviour are reported. The meeting house is in an affluent area with low levels of crime and social deprivation.

3.8. Plans for change

There are unspecified proposals for improved access.

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 building is said to meet the needs of the local Meeting. Any adaptations required would relate to access. There are no historic furnishings to inhibit minor change, although any structural or external alterations would need to take account of the local listing and location within a conservation area.

ii) For wider community use, in addition to local Meeting use: As stated above, extended use would only be possible if the access provision were to be improved. Again, any structural or external alterations would need to take account of the local listing and location within a conservation area.

iii) Being laid down as a Meeting House: The building could very readily revert to residential use, either as a house or flats. The local listing and location within a conservation area rule out site redevelopment as an option.

Part 5: Category: 3